# CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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A GREAT SUCCESS.1 A STORY IN THREE PARTS. BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.

### PART III.

#### CHAPTER V.

"BARBARIANS, Philistines, Populace"!'

The young golden-haired man of letters who was lounging on the grass beside Arthur Meadows repeated the words to himself in an absent voice, turning over the pages meanwhile of a book lying before him, as though in search of a passage he had noticed and lost. He presently found it again, and turned laughing towards Meadows, who was trifling with a French novel.

'Do you remember this passage in Culture and Anarchy-" I often, therefore, when I want to distinguish clearly the aristocratic class from the Philistines proper, or middle class, name the former, in my own mind, the Barbarians. And when I go through the country, and see this or that beautiful and imposing seat of theirs crowning the landscape, 'There,' I say to myself, 'is a great

fortified post of the Barbarians!""

The youth pointed smiling to the fine Scotch house seen sideways on the other side of the lawn. Its turreted and battlemented front rose high above the low and spreading buildings which made the bulk of the house, so that it was a feudal castle-by no means, however, so old as it looked—on a front view, and a large and roomy villa from the rear. Meadows, looking at it, appreciated the fitness of the quotation, and laughed in response.

'Ungrateful wretch,' he said- after that dinner last night!'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1915, by Mrs. Humphry Ward, in the United States of America. VOL, XXXIX,-NO. 229, N.S.

'All the same, Matthew Arnold had that dinner in mind—chef and all! Listen! "The graver self of the Barbarian likes honours and consideration; his more relaxed self, field-sports and pleasures." Isn't it exact? Grouse-driving in the morning—bridge, politics, Cabinet-making, and the best of food in the evening. And I should put our hostess very high—wouldn't you?—among the chatelaines of the "great fortified posts"?'

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Meadows assented, but rather languidly. The day was extremely hot; he was tired, moreover, by a long walk with the guns the day before, and by conversation after dinner, led by Lady Dunstable, which had lasted up to nearly one o'clock in the morning. The talk had been brilliant, no doubt. Meadows, however, did not feel that he had come off very well in it. His hostess had deliberately pitted him against two of the ablest men in England, and he was well aware that he had disappointed her. Lady Dunstable had a way of behaving to her favourite author or artist of the moment as though she were the fancier and he the cock. She fought him against other people's cocks with astonishing zeal and passion; and whenever he failed to kill, or lost too many feathers in the process, her annoyance was evident.

Meadows was in truth becoming a little tired of her dictation, although it was only ten days since he had arrived under her roof. There was a large amount of lethargy combined with his ability; and he hated to be obliged to live at any pace but his own. But Rachel Dunstable was an imperious friend, never tired herself, apparently, either in mind or body; and those who could not walk, eat, and talk to please her were apt to know it. Her opinions too, both political and literary, were in some directions extremely violent; and though, in general, argument and contradiction gave her pleasure, she had her days and moods, and Meadows had already suffered occasional sets-down, of a kind to which he was not accustomed.

But if he was—just a little—out of love with his new friend, in all other respects he was enjoying himself enormously. The long days on the moors, the luxurious life indoors, the changing and generally agreeable company, all the thousand easements and pleasures that wealth brings with it, the skilled service, the motors, the costly cigars, the wines—there was a Sybarite in Meadows which revelled in them all. He had done without them; he would do without them again; but there they were—exceedingly good creatures of God, while they lasted; and only the hypocrites pretended otherwise. His sympathy, in the old poverty-stricken

days, would have been all with the plaintive American—' There's d——d good times in the world, and I ain't in 'em.'

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All the same, the fleshpots of Pitlochry had by no means put his wife out of his mind. His incurable laziness and procrastination in small things had led him to let slip post after post; but that very morning, at any rate, he had really written her a decent letter. And he was beginning to be anxious to hear from her about the yachting plan. If Lady Dunstable had asked him a few days later, he was not sure he would have accepted so readily. After all, the voyage might be stormy, and the lady—difficult. Doris must be dull in London,—'poor little cat!'

But then a very natural wrath returned upon him. Why on earth had she stayed behind? No doubt Lady Dunstable was formidable, but so was Doris in her own way. 'She'd soon have held her own. Lady D. would have had to come to terms!' However, he remembered with some compunction that Doris did seem to have been a good deal neglected at Crosby Ledgers, and that he had not done much to help her.

It was an 'off' day for the shooters, and Lady Dunstable's guests were lounging about the garden, writing letters or playing a little leisurely golf on the lower reaches of the moor. Some of the ladies, indeed, had not yet appeared downstairs; a sleepy heat reigned over the valley with its winding stream, and veiled the distant hills. Meadows' companion, Ralph Barrow, a young novelist of promise, had gone fast asleep on the grass; Meadows was drowsing over his book; the dogs slept on the terrace steps; and in the summer silence the murmur of the river far below stole up the hill on which the house stood, and its soft song held the air.

Suddenly there was a disturbance. The dogs sprang up and barked. There was a firm step on the gravel. Lady Dunstable, stick in hand, her short leather-bound skirt showing boots and gaiters of the most business-like description, came quickly towards the seat on which Meadows sat.

'Mr. Meadows, I summon you for a walk! Sir Luke and Mr. Frome are coming. We propose to get to the tarn and back before lunch.'

The tarn was at least two miles away, a stiff climb over difficult moor. Meadows, startled from something very near sleep, looked up, and a spirit of revolt seized upon him, provoked by the masterful tone and eyes of the lady.

'Very sorry, Lady Dunstable!—but I must write some letters before luncheon.'

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'Oh no!—put them off! I have been thinking of what you told me yesterday of your scheme for your new set of lectures. I have a great deal to say to you about it.'

'I really shouldn't be worth talking to now,' laughed Meadows; 'this heat has made me so sleepy. To-night—or after tea—by all means!'

Lady Dunstable looked annoyed.

'I am expecting the Duke's party at tea' she said peremptorily.

'This will be my only chance to-day.'

'Then let's put it off—till to-morrow!' said Meadows, as he rose, still smiling. 'It is most kind of you, but I really must write my letters, and my brains are pulp. But I will escort you through the garden, if I may.'

His hostess turned sharply, and walked back towards the front of the house where Sir Luke and Mr. Frome, a young and rising Under-Secretary, were waiting for her. Meadows accompanied her, but found her exceedingly ungracious. She did, however, inform him, as they followed the other two towards the exit from the garden, that she had come to the conclusion that the subject he was proposing for his second series of lectures, to be given at Dunstable House during the winter, 'would never do.'

'Famous Controversies of the Nineteenth Century—political and religious.' The very sound of it was enough to keep people away! 'What people expect from you is talk about persons—not ideas. Ideas are not your line!'

Meadows flushed a little. What his 'line' might be, he said, he had not yet discovered. But he liked his subject, and meant to stick to it.

Lady Dunstable turned on him a pair of sarcastic eyes.

'That's so like you clever people. You would die rather than take advice.'

'Advice!-yes. As much as you like, dear lady. But-'

'But what—' she asked, imperatively, nettled in her turn.

'Well—you must put it prettily!' said Meadows smiling. 'We want a great deal of jam with the powder.'

'You want to be flattered? I never flatter! It is the most despicable of arts.'

On the contrary—one of the most skilled. And I have heard you do it to perfection.

His daring half irritated, half amused her. It was her turn to flush. Her thin, sallow face and dark eyes lit up vindictively.

'One should never remind one's friends of their vices,' she said with animation.

'Ah—if they are vices! But flattery is merely a virtue out of place—kindness gone wrong. From the point of view of the moralist, that is. From the point of view of the ordinary mortal,

it is what no men-and few women-can do without!'

She smiled grimly, enjoying the spar. They carried it on a little while, Meadows, now fairly on his mettle, administering a little deft though veiled castigation here and there, in requital for various acts of rudeness of which she had been guilty towards him and others during the preceding days. She grew restive occasionally, but on the whole she bore it well. Her arrogance was not of the small-minded sort; and the best chance with her was to defy her.

At the gate leading on to the moor, Meadows resolutely came

to a stop.

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'Your letters are the merest excuse!' said Lady Dunstable. 'I don't believe you will write one of them! I notice you always put off unpleasant duties.'

'Give me credit at least for the intention.'

Smiling, he held the gate open for her, and she passed through, discomfited, to join Sir Luke on the other side. Mr. Frome, the Under-Secretary, a young man of Jewish family and amazing talents, who had been listening with amusement to the conversation behind him, turned back to say to Meadows, at a safe distance—'Keep it up!—Keep it up! You avenge us all!'

Presently, as she and her two companions wound slowly up the moor, Sir Luke Malford, who had only arrived the night before, inquired gaily of his hostess:

'So she wouldn't come ?—the little wife?'

'I gave her every chance. She scorned us.'

'You mean—"she funked us." Have you any idea, I wonder, how alarming you are?'

Lady Dunstable exclaimed impatiently:

'People represent me as a kind of ogre. I am nothing of the kind. I only expect everybody to play up.'

'Ah, but you make the rules!' laughed Sir Luke. 'I thought that young woman might have been a decided acquisition.'

'She hadn't the very beginnings of a social gift,' declared his

companion. 'A stubborn and rather stupid little person. I am much afraid she will stand in her husband's way.'

'But suppose you blow up a happy home, by encouraging him to come without her? I bet anything she is feeling jealous and ill-used. You ought—I am sure you ought—to have a guilty

conscience; but you look perfectly brazen!'

Sir Luke's banter was generally accepted with indifference, but on this occasion it provoked Lady Dunstable. She protested with vehemence that she had given Mrs. Meadows every chance, and that a young woman who was both trivial and conceited could not expect to get on in society. Sir Luke gathered from her tone that she and Mrs. Meadows had somehow crossed swords, and that the wife might look out for consequences. He had been a witness of this kind of thing before in Lady Dunstable's circle; and he was conscious of a passing sympathy with the pleasant-faced little woman he remembered at Crosby Ledgers. At the same time he had been Rachel Dunstable's friend for twenty years; originally, her suitor. He spent a great part of his life in her company, and her ways seemed to him part of the order of things.

Meanwhile Meadows walked back to the house. He had been a good deal nettled by Lady Dunstable's last remark to him. But he had taken pains not to show it. Doris might say such things to him—but no one else. They were, of course, horribly true! Well—quarrelling with Lady Dunstable was amusing enough—when there was room to escape her. But how would it be in the close quarters

of a yacht?

On his way through the garden he fell in with Miss Field—Mattie Field, the plump and smiling cousin of the house, who was apparently as necessary to the Dunstables in the Highlands, as in London, or at Crosby Ledgers. Her rôle in the Dunstable household seemed to Meadows to be that of 'shock absorber.' She took all the small rubs and jars on her own shoulders, so that Lady Dunstable might escape them. If the fish did not arrive from Edinburgh, if the motor broke down, if a gun failed, or a guest set up influenza, it was always Miss Field who came to the rescue. She had devices for every emergency. It was generally supposed that she had no money, and that the Dunstables made her residence with them worth while. But if so, she had none of the ways of the poor relation. On the contrary, her independence was plain; she had a very free and merry tongue; and Lady Dunstable, who snubbed

everybody, never snubbed Mattie Field. Lord Dunstable was clearly devoted to her.

She greeted Meadows rather absently.

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'Rachel didn't carry you off? Oh, then—I wonder if I may ask you something?'

Meadows assured her she might ask him anything.

'I wonder if you will save yourself for a walk with Lord Dunstable. Will you ask him? He's very low, and you would cheer him up.'

Meadows looked at her interrogatively. He too had noticed that Lord Dunstable had seemed for some days to be out of spirits.

'Why do people have sons!' said Miss Field, briskly.

Meadows understood the reference. It was common knowledge among the Dunstables' friends that their son was anything but a comfort to them.

'Anything particularly wrong?' he asked her in a lowered voice, as they neared the house. At the same time, he could not help wondering whether, under all circumstances—if her nearest and dearest were made mincement in a railway accident, or crushed by an earthquake—this fair-haired, rosy-cheeked lady would still keep her perennial smile. He had never yet seen her without it.

Miss Field replied in a joking tone that Lord Dunstable was depressed because the graceless Herbert had promised his parents a visit—a whole week—in August, and had now cried off on some excuse or other. Meadows inquired if Lady Dunstable minded as much as her husband.

'Quite!' laughed Miss Field. 'It is not so much that she wants to see Herbert as that she's found someone to marry him to. You'll see the lady this afternoon. She comes with the Duke's party, to be looked at.'

'But I understand that the young man is by no means manageable?'

Miss Field's amusement increased.

'That's Rachel's delusion. She knows very well that she hasn't been able to manage him so far; but she's always full of fresh schemes for managing him. She thinks, if she could once marry him to the right wife, she and the wife between them could get the whip hand of him.'

Does she care for him?' said Meadows, bluntly.

Miss Field considered the question, and for the first time Meadows perceived a grain of seriousness in her expression. But she emerged from her meditations, smiling as usual.

'She'd be hard hit if anything very bad happened!'

'What could happen?'

'Well, of course they never know whether he won't marry to please himself—produce somebody impossible!'

'And Lady Dunstable would suffer?'

Miss Field chuckled.

'I really believe you think her a kind of griffin—a stony creature with a hole where her heart ought to be. Most of her friends do. Rachel, of course, goes through life assuming that none of the disagreeable things that happen to other people will ever happen to her. But if they ever did happen—'

'The very stones would cry out? But hasn't she lost all

influence with the youth?'

'She won't believe it. She's always scheming for him. And when he's not here she feels so affectionate and so good! And directly he comes—'

'I see! A tragedy—and a common one! Well, in half an hour I shall be ready for his lordship. Will you arrange it? I must write a letter first.'

Miss Field nodded and departed. Meadows honestly meant to follow her into the house and write some pressing business letters. But the sunshine was so delightful, the sight of the empty bench and the abandoned novel on the other side of the lawn so beguiling, that after all he turned his lazy steps thitherward, half ashamed, half amused to think how well Lady Dunstable had read his character.

The guests had all disappeared. Meadows had the garden to himself, and all its summer prospect of moor and stream. It was close on noon—a hot and heavenly day! And again he thought of Doris cooped up in London. Perhaps, after all, he would get out of that cruise!

Ah! there was the morning train—the midnight express from King's Cross just arriving in the busy little town lying in the valley at his feet. He watched it gliding along the valley, and heard the noise of the brakes. Were any new guests expected by it? he wondered. Hardly! The Lodge seemed quite full.

Twenty minutes later he threw away the novel impatiently, Midway, the story had gone to pieces. He rose from his feet, intending this time to tackle his neglected duties in earnest. As he did so, he heard a motor climbing the steep drive, and in front of it a lady, walking.

He stood arrested-in a stupor of astonishment.

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It was indeed Doris. She came wearily, looking from side to side, like one uncertain of her way. Then she too perceived Meadows, and stopped.

Meadows was conscious of two mixed feelings—first, a very lively pleasure at the sight of her, and then annoyance. What on earth had she come for? To recover him?—to protest against his not writing?—to make a scene, in short? His guilty imagination in a flash showed her to him throwing herself into his arms—weeping—on this wide lawn—for all the world to see.

But she did nothing of the kind. She directed the motor, which was really a taxi from the station, to stop without approaching the front door, and then she herself walked quickly towards her husband.

'Arthur!—you got my letter? I could only write yesterday.'
She had reached him, and they had joined hands mechanically.

'Letter?—I got no letter! If you posted one, it has probably arrived by your train. What on earth, Doris, is the meaning of this? Is there anything wrong?'

His expression was half angry, half concerned, for he saw plainly that she was tired and jaded. Of course! Long journeys always knocked her up. She meanwhile stood looking at him as though trying to read the impression produced on him by her escapade. Something evidently in his manner hurt her, for she withdrew her hand, and her face stiffened.

'There is nothing wrong with me, thank you! Of course I did not come without good reason.'

'But, my dear, are you come to stay?' cried Meadows, looking helplessly at the taxi. 'And you never wrote to Lady Dunstable?'

For he could only imagine that Doris had reconsidered her refusal of the invitation which had originally included them both, and—either tired of being left alone, or angry with him for not writing—had devised this coup de main, this violent shake to the kaleidoscope. But what an extraordinary step! It could only cover them both with ridicule. His cheeks were already burning.

Doris surveyed him very quietly.

'No—I didn't write to Lady Dunstable—I wrote to you—and sent her a message. I suppose—I shall have to stay the night.'

'But what on earth are we to say to her?' cried Meadows in

desperation. 'They're out walking now—but she'll be back directly. There isn't a corner in the house! I've got a little bachelor room in the attics. Really, Doris, if you were going to do this, you should have given both her and me notice! There is a crowd of people here!'

Frown and voice were Jovian indeed. Doris, however, showed

no tremors.

'Lady Dunstable will find somewhere to put me up,' she said, half scornfully. 'Is there a telegram for me?'

'A telegram? Why should there be a telegram? What is

the meaning of all this? For heaven's sake, explain!'

Doris, however, did not attempt to explain. Her mood had been very soft on the journey. But Arthur's reception of her had suddenly stirred the root of bitterness again; and it was shooting fast and high. Whatever she had done or left undone, he ought not to have been able to conceal that he was glad to see her—he ought not to have been able to think of Lady Dunstable first! She began to take a pleasure in mystifying him.

'I expected a telegram. I daresay it will come soon. You see I've asked someone else to come this afternoon—and she'll have

to be put up too.'

'Asked someone else!—to Lady Dunstable's house!' Meadows stood bewildered. 'Really, Doris, have you taken leave of your senses?'

She stood with shining eyes, apparently enjoying his astonish-

ment. Then she suddenly bethought herself.

'I must go and pay the taxi.' Turning round, she coolly surveyed the 'fortified post.' 'It looks big enough to take me in. Arthur!—I think you may pay the man. Just take out my bag, and tell the footman to put it in your room. That will do for the present. I shall sit down here and wait for Lady Dunstable. I'm pretty tired.'

The thought of what the magnificent gentleman presiding over Lady Dunstable's hall would say to the unexpected irruption of Mrs. Meadows, and Mrs. Meadows' bag, upon the 'fortified post' he controlled, was simply beyond expressing. Meadows tried to

face his wife with dignity.

'I think we'd better keep the taxi, Doris. Then you and I can go back to the hotel together. We can't force ourselves upon Lady Dunstable like this, my dear. I'd better go and tell someone to pack my things. But we must, of course, wait and see Lady

Dunstable—though how you will explain your coming, and get yourself—and me—out of this absurd predicament, I cannot even pretend to imagine!

Doris sat down-wearily.

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'Don't keep the taxi, Arthur. I assure you Lady Dunstable will be very glad to keep both me—and my bag. Or if she won't—Lord Dunstable will.'

Meadows came nearer—bent down to study her tired face.

'There's some mystery, of course, Doris, in all this! Aren't you going to tell me what it means?'

His wife's pale cheeks flushed.

'I would have told you—if you'd been the least bit glad to see me! But—if you don't pay the taxi, Arthur, it will run up like anything!'

She pointed peremptorily to the ticking vehicle and the impatient driver. Meadows went mechanically, paid the driver, shouldered the bag, and carried it into the hall of the Lodge. He then perceived that two grinning and evidently inquisitive footmen, waiting in the hall for anything that might turn up for them to do, had been watching the whole scene—the arrival of the taxi, and the meeting between the unknown lady and himself, through a side window.

Burning to box someone's ears, Meadows loftily gave the bag to one of them with instructions that it should be taken to his room, and then turned to rejoin his wife.

As he crossed the gravel in front of the house, his mind ran through all possible hypotheses. But he was entirely without a clue—except the clue of jealousy. He could not hide from himself that Doris had been jealous of Lady Dunstable, and had perhaps been hurt by his rather too numerous incursions into the great world without her, his apparent readiness to desert her for cleverer women. 'Little goose!—as if I ever cared twopence for any of them!'—he thought angrily. 'And now she makes us both laughing-stocks!'

And yet, Doris being Doris—a proud, self-contained, well-bred little person, particularly sensitive to ridicule—the whole proceeding became the more incredible the more he faced it.

One o'clock!—striking from the church tower in the valley! He hurried towards the slight figure on the distant seat. Lady Dunstable might return at any moment. He foresaw the encounter—the great lady's insolence—Doris's humiliation—and his own. Well,

at least let him agree with Doris on a common story, before his hostess arrived.

He sped across the grass, very conscious, as he approached the seat, of Doris's drooping look and attitude. Travelling all those hours!—and no doubt without any proper breakfast! However Lady Dunstable might behave, he would carry Doris into the Lodge directly, and have her properly looked after. Miss Field and he would see to that.

Suddenly—a sound of talk and laughter, from the shrubbery which divided the flower garden from the woods and the moor. Lady Dunstable emerged, with her two companions on either hand. Her vivid, masculine face was flushed with exercise and discussion. She seemed to be attacking the Under-Secretary, who, however, was clearly enjoying himself; while Sir Luke, walking a little apart, threw in an occasional gibe.

'I tell you your land policy here in Scotland will gain you nothing; and in England it will lose you everything.—Hullo!'

Lady Dunstable's exclamation, as she came to a stop and put up

a tortoise-shell eyeglass, was clearly audible.

'Doris!' cried Meadows excitedly in his wife's ear—'Look here!—what are you going to say!—what am I to say? that you got tired of London, and wanted some Scotch air?—that we intend to go off together?—For goodness' sake, what is it to be?'

Doris rose, her lips breaking irrepressibly into smiles. 'Never mind, Arthur; I'll get through somehow.'

#### CHAPTER VI.

The two ladies advanced towards each other across the lawn, while Meadows followed his wife in speechless confusion and annoyance, utterly at a loss how to extricate either himself or Doris; compelled, indeed, to leave it all to her. Sir Luke and the Under-Secretary had paused in the drive. Their looks as they watched Lady Dunstable's progress showed that they guessed at something dramatic in the little scene.

Nothing could apparently have been more unequal than the two chief actors in it. Lady Dunstable, with the battlements of 'the great fortified post' rising behind her, tall and wiry of figure, her black hawk's eyes fixed upon her visitor, might have stood for all her class; for those too powerful and prosperous Barbarians

who have ruled and enjoyed England so long. Doris, small and slight, in a blue cotton coat and skirt, dusty from long travelling, and a childish garden hat, came hesitatingly over the grass, with colour which came and went.

'How do you do, Mrs. Meadows! This is indeed an unexpected pleasure! I must quarrel with your husband for not giving us warning.'

Doris's complexion had settled into a bright pink as she shook hands with Lady Dunstable. But she spoke quite composedly.

'My husband knew nothing about it, Lady Dunstable. My letter does not seem to have reached him.'

'Ah? Our posts are very bad, no doubt; though generally, I must say, they arrive very punctually. Well, so you were tired of London?—you wanted to see how we were looking after your husband?'

Lady Dunstable threw a sarcastic glance at Meadows standing tongue-tied in the background.

'I wanted to see you,' said Doris quietly, with a slight accent on the 'you.'

Lady Dunstable looked amused.

'Did you? How very nice of you! And you've—you've brought your luggage?' Lady Dunstable looked round her as though expecting to see it at the front door.

'I brought a bag. Arthur took it in for me.'

'I'm so sorry! I assure you, if I had only known—But we haven't a corner! Mr. Meadows will bear me out—it's absurd, but true. These Scotch lodges have really no room in them at all!'

Lady Dunstable pointed with airy insolence to the spreading pile behind her. Doris—for all the agitation of her hidden purpose could have laughed outright. But Meadows, rather roughly, intervened.

'We shall, of course, go to the hotel, Lady Dunstable. My wife's letter seems somehow to have missed me, but naturally we never dreamed of putting you out. Perhaps you will give us some lunch—my wife seems rather tired—and then we will take our departure.'

Doris turned—put a hand on his arm—but addressed Lady Dunstable.

'Can I see you-alone-for a few minutes-before lunch?'

'Before lunch? We are all very hungry, I'm afraid,' said Lady Dunstable, with a smile. Meadows was conscious of a rising fury.

His quick sense perceived something delicately offensive in every word and look of the great lady. Doris, of course, had done an incredibly foolish thing. What she had come to say to Lady Dunstable he could not conceive; for the first explanation—that of a silly jealousy—had by now entirely failed him. But it was evident to him that Lady Dunstable assumed it—or chose to assume it. And for the first time he thought her odious!

Doris seemed to guess it, for she pressed his arm as though to

keep him quiet.

'Before lunch, please,' she repeated. 'I think—you will soon understand.' With an odd, and—for the first time—slightly puzzled look at her visitor, Lady Dunstable said with patronising politeness—

'By all means. Shall we come to my sitting-room?'

She led the way to the house. Meadows followed, till a sign from Doris waved him back. On the way Doris found herself greeted by Sir Luke Malford, bowed to by various unknown gentlemen, and her hand grasped by Miss Field.

'You do look done! Have you come straight from London? What—is Rachel carrying you off? I shall send you in a glass of

wine and a biscuit directly!'

Doris said nothing. She got somehow through all the curious eyes turned upon her; she followed Lady Dunstable through the spacious passages of the Lodge, adorned with the usual sportsman's trophies, till she was ushered into a small sitting-room, Lady Dunstable's particular den, crowded with photographs of half the celebrities of the day—the poets, savants, and artists, of England, Europe, and America. On an easel stood a masterly small portrait of Lord Dunstable as a young man, by Bastien Lepage; and not far from it—rather pushed into a corner—a sketch by Millais of a fair-haired boy, leaning against a pony.

By this time Doris was quivering both with excitement and fatigue. She sank into a chair, and turned eagerly to the wine and biscuits with which Miss Field pursued her. While she ate and drank, Lady Dunstable sat in a high chair observing her, one long and pointed foot crossed over the other, her black eyes alive with satiric interrogation, to which, however, she gave no words.

The wine was reviving. Doris found her voice. As the door

closed on Miss Field, she bent forward :-

'Lady Dunstable, I didn't come here on my own account, and had there been time of course I should have given you notice. I

came entirely on your account, because something was happening to you—and Lord Dunstable—which you didn't know, and which made me—very sorry for you!

Lady Dunstable started slightly.

'Happening to me?—and Lord Dunstable?'
'I have been seeing your son, Lady Dunstable.'

An instant change passed over the countenance of that lady. It darkened, and the eyes became cold and wary.

'Indeed? I didn't know you were acquainted with him.'

'I never saw him till a few days ago. Then I saw him—in my uncle's studio—with a woman—a woman to whom he is engaged.'

Lady Dunstable started again.

'I think you must be mistaken,' she said quickly, with a slight but haughty straightening of her shoulders.

Doris shook her head.

'No, I am not mistaken. I will tell you—if you don't mind—exactly what I have heard and seen.'

And with a puckered brow and visible effort she entered on the story of the happenings of which she had been a witness in Bentley's studio. She was perfectly conscious-for a time-that she was telling it against a dead weight of half scornful, half angry incredulity on Lady Dunstable's part. Rachel Dunstable listened, indeed, attentively. But it was clear that she resented the story, which she did not believe; resented the telling of it, on her own ground, by this young woman whom she disliked; and resented above all the compulsory discussion which it involved, of her most intimate affairs, with a stranger and her social inferior. All sorts of suspicions, indeed, ran through her mind as to the motives that could have prompted Mrs. Meadows to hurry up to Scotland, without taking even the decently polite trouble to announce herself, bringing this unlikely and trumped-up tale. Most probably, a mean jealousy of her husband, and his greater social success !- a determination to force herself on people who had not paid the same attention to herself as to him, to make them pay attention, willy-nilly. Of course Herbert had undesirable acquaintances, and was content to go about with people entirely beneath him, in birth and education. Everybody knew it, alack! But he was really not such a fool—such a heartless fool—as this story implied! Mrs. Meadows had been taken in-willingly taken in-had exaggerated everything she said for her own purposes. The mother's wrath indeed was

rapidly rising to the smiting point, when a change in the narrative arrested her.

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'And then-I couldn't help it! '-there was a new note of agitation in Doris's voice—' but what had happened was so horrid it was so like seeing a man going to ruin under one's eyes, for, of course, one knew that she would get hold of him again-that I ran out after your son and begged him to break with her, not to see her again, to take the opportunity, and be done with her! And then he told me quite calmly that he must marry her, that he could not help himself, but he would never live with her. He would marry her at a registry office, provide for her, and leave her. And then he said he would do it at once—that he was going to his lawyers to arrange everything as to money and so on-on condition that she never troubled him again. He was eager to get it done-that he might be delivered from her-from her company-which one could see had become dreadful to him. I implored him not to do such a thing-to pay any money rather than do it-but not to marry her! I begged him to think of you-and his father. But he said he was bound to her—he had compromised her, or some such thing: and he had given his word in writing. There was only one thing which could stop it—if she had told him lies about her former life. But he had no reason to think she had; and he was not going to try and find out. So then-I saw a ray of daylight-'

She stopped abruptly, looking full at the woman opposite, who was now following her every word—but like one seized against her will.

'Do you remember a Miss Wigram, Lady Dunstable—whose father had a living near Crosby Ledgers?'

Lady Dunstable moved involuntarily—her eyelids flickered a little.

'Certainly. Why do you ask?'

'She saw Mr. Dunstable—and Miss Flink—in my uncle's studio, and she was so distressed to think what—what Lord Dunstable'—there was a perceptible pause before the name—'would feel, if his son married her, that she determined to find out the truth about her. She told me she had one or two clues, and I sent her to a cousin of mine—a very clever solicitor—to be advised. That was yesterday morning. Then I got my uncle to find out your son—and bring him to me yesterday afternoon before I started. He came to our house in Kensington, and I told him I had come across some very doubtful stories about Miss Flink. He was very

unwilling to hear anything. After all, he said, he was not going to live with her. And she had nursed him—'

'Nursed him!' said Lady Dunstable, quickly. She had risen, and was leaning against the mantelpiece, looking sharply down upon her visitor.

'That was the beginning of it all. He was ill in the winter-in

his lodgings.'

'I never heard of it!' For the first time, there was a touch of something natural and passionate in the voice.

Doris looked a little embarrassed.

'Your son told me it was pneumonia.'

'I never heard a word of it! And this—this creature nursed him?' The tone of the robbed lioness at last!—singularly inappropriate under all the circumstances. Doris struggled on.

'An actor friend of your son brought her to see him. And she really devoted herself to him. He declared to me he owed her a

great deal-'

'He need have owed her nothing,' said Lady Dunstable, sternly. 'He had only to send a postcard—a wire—to his own people.'

'He thought-you were so busy,' said Doris, dropping her

eyes to the carpet.

A sound of contemptuous anger showed that her shaft-her mild shaft-had gone home. She hurried on- But at last I got him to promise me to wait a week. That was yesterday at five o'clock. He wouldn't promise me to write to you-or his father. He seemed so desperately anxious to settle it all-in his own way. But I said a good deal about your name—and the family—and the horrible pain he would be giving-any way. Was it kind-was it right towards you, not only to give you no opportunity of helping or advising him-but also to take no steps to find out whether the woman he was going to marry was-not only unsuitable, wholly unsuitable—that, of course, he knows—but a disgrace? I argued with him that he must have some suspicion of the stories she has told him at different times, or he wouldn't have tried to protect himself in this particular way. He didn't deny it; but he said she had looked after him, and been kind to him, when nobody else was, and he should feel a beast if he pressed her too hardly.'

"When nobody else was!" repeated Lady Dunstable, scornfully, her voice trembling with bitterness. Really, Mrs. Meadows, it is very difficult for me to believe that my son ever used such

words!'

Doris hesitated, then she raised her eyes, and with the happy feeling of one applying the scourge, in the name of Justice, she said with careful mildness:—

'I hope you will forgive me for telling you—but I feel as if I oughtn't to keep back anything—Mr. Dunstable said to me: "My mother might have prevented it—but—she was never interested in me."'

Another indignant exclamation from Lady Dunstable. Doris hurried on. 'Only this is the important point! At last I got his

promise, and I got it in writing. I have it here.'

Dead silence. Doris opened her little handbag, took out a letter, in an open envelope, and handed it to Lady Dunstable, who at first seemed as if she were going to refuse it. However, after a moment's hesitation, she lifted her long-handled eyeglass and read it. It ran as follows:—

'DEAR MRS. MEADOWS,-I do not know whether I ought to do what you ask me. But you have asked me very kindly-you have really been awfully good to me, in taking so much trouble. I know I'm a stupid fool-they always told me so at home. But I don't want to do anything mean, or to go back on a woman who once did me a good turn; with whom also once-for I may as well be quite honest about it-I thought I was in love. However, I see there is something in what you say, and I will wait a week before marrying Miss Flink. But if you tell my people—I suppose you will—don't let them imagine they can break it off-except for that one reason. And I shan't lift a finger to break it off. I shall make no inquiries-I shall go on with the lawyers, and all that. My present intention is to marry Miss Flink-on the terms I have stated-in a week's time. If you do see my people—especially my father—tell them I'm awfully sorry to be such a nuisance to them. I got myself into the mess without meaning it, and now there's really only one way out. Thank you again.

'Yours gratefully, HERBERT DUNSTABLE.'

Lady Dunstable crushed the letter in her hand. All pretence of incredulity was gone. She began to walk stormily up and down. Doris sank back in her chair, watching her, conscious of the most strangely mingled feelings, a touch of womanish triumph indeed, a pleasing sense of retribution, but, welling up through it, something profound and tender. If he should ever write such a letter to a stranger, while his mother was alive!

Lady Dunstable stopped.

'What chance is there of saving my son?' she said, peremptorily.
'You will, of course, tell us all you know. Lord Dunstable must go to town at once.' She touched an electric bell beside her.

'Oh no!' cried Doris springing up. 'He mustn't go, please, until we have some more information. Miss Wigram is coming—this afternoon.'

Rachel Dunstable stood stupefied—with her hand on the bell.

'Miss Wigram-coming-'

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'Don't you see?' cried Doris. 'She was to spend all yesterday afternoon and evening in seeing two or three people—people who know. There is a friend of my uncle's—an artist—who saw a great deal of Miss Flink, and got to know a lot about her. Of course he may not have been willing to say anything, but I think he probably would—he was so mad with her for a trick she played him in the middle of a big piece of work. And if he was able to put us on any useful track, then Miss Wigram was to come up here straight, and tell you everything she could. But I thought there would have been a telegram—from her—' Her voice dropped on a note of disappointment.

There was a knock at the door. The butler entered, and at the same moment the luncheon gong echoed through the house.

'Tell Miss Field not to wait luncheon for me,' said Lady Dunstable sharply. 'And, Ferris, I want his lordship's things packed at once, for London. Don't say anything to him at present, but in ten minutes' time just manage to tell him quietly that I should like to see him here. You understand—I don't want any fuss made. Tell Miss Field that Mrs. Meadows is too tired to come in to luncheon, and that I will come in presently.'

The butler, who had the aspect of a don or a bishop, said 'Yes, my lady,' in that dry tone which implied that for twenty years the house of Dunstable had been built upon himself, as its rock, and he was not going to fail it now. He vanished, with just one lightning turn of the eyes towards the little lady in the blue linen dress; and Lady Dunstable resumed her walk, sunk in flushed meditation. She seemed to have forgotten Doris, when she heard an exclamation:—

'Ah, there is the telegram!'

And Doris, running to the window, waved to a diminutive telegraph boy, who, being new to his job, had come up to the front entrance of the Lodge instead of the back, and was now—recognising his misdeed—retreating in alarm from the mere aspect of 'the great

fortified post.' He saw the lady at the window however, and checked his course.

'For me!' cried Doris, triumphantly-and she tore it open.

'Can't arrive till between eight and nine. Think I have got all we want. Please take a room for me at hotel.—ALICE WIGRAM.'

Doris turned back into the room, and handed the telegram to Lady Dunstable, who read it slowly.

'Did you say this was the Alice Wigram I knew?'

'Her father had one of your livings,' repeated Doris. 'He

died last year.'

'I know. I quarrelled with him. I cannot conceive why Alice Wigram should do me a good turn!' Lady Dunstable threw back her head, her challenging look fixed upon her visitor. Doris was certain she had it in her mind to add—' or you either!'—but refrained.

'Lord Dunstable was always a friend to her father,' said Doris, with the same slight emphasis on the 'Lord' as before. 'And she felt for the estate—the poor people—the tenants.'

Rachel Dunstable shook her head impatiently.

'I daresay. But I got into a scrape with the Wigrams. I expect that you would think, Mrs. Meadows—perhaps most people would think, as of course her father did—that I once treated Miss Wigram unkindly!'

'Oh, what does it matter?' cried Doris, hastily, '—what does it matter? She wants to help—she's sorry for you. You should see that woman! It would be too awful if your son was tied to her

for life!'

She sat up straight, all her soul in her eyes and in her pleasant face.

There was a pause. Then Lady Dunstable, whose expression had changed, came a little nearer to her.

'And you-I wonder why you took all this trouble?'

Doris said nothing. She fell back slowly in her chair, looking at the tall woman standing over her. Tears came into her eyes—brimmed—overflowed—in silence. Her lips smiled. Rachel Dunstable bent over her in bewilderment.

'To have a son,' murmured Doris under her breath, 'and then to see him ruined like this! No love for him!—no children—no grandchildren for oneself, when one is old—'

Her voice died away.

"To have a son"? repeated Lady Dunstable, wondering-

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Doris said nothing. Only she put up her hand feebly, and wiped away the tears-still smiling. After which she shut her eyes.

Lady Dunstable gasped. Then the long, sallow face flushed deeply. She walked over to a sofa on the other side of the room,

arranged the pillows on it, and came back to Doris.

'Will you, please, let me put you on that sofa? You oughtn't to have had this long journey. Of course you will stay here—and Miss Wigram too. It seems-I shall owe you a great deal-and I could not have expected you-to think about me-at all. I can do rude things. But I can also-be sorry for my sins!

Doris heard an awkward and rather tremulous laugh. Upon which she opened her eyes, no less embarrassed than her hostess, and did as she was told. Lady Dunstable made her as comfortable as a hand so little used to the feminine arts could manage.

'Now I will send you in some luncheon, and go and talk to Lord Dunstable. Please rest till I come back.'

Doris lay still. She wanted very much to see Arthur, and she wondered, till her head ached, whether he would think her a great fool for her pains. Surely he would come and find her soon. Oh, the time people spent on lunching in these big houses!

The vibration of the train seemed to be still running through her limbs. She was indeed wearied out, and in a few minutes, what with the sudden quiet and the softness of the cushions which had

been spread for her, she fell unexpectedly asleep.

When she woke, she saw her husband sitting beside herpatiently—with a tray on his knee.

'Oh, Arthur !--what time is it ? Have I been asleep long ?'

'Nearly an hour. I looked in before, but Lady Dunstable wouldn't let me wake you. She-and he-and I-have been talking. Upon my word, Doris, you've been and gone and done it! But don't say anything! You've got to eat this chicken first.'

He fed her with it, looking at her the while with affectionate and admiring eyes. Somehow, Doris became dimly aware that she was going to be a heroine.

'Have they told you, Arthur?'

'Everything that you've told her. (No-not everything!-

thought Doris.) You are a brick, Doris! And the way you've done it! That's what impresses her ladyship! She knows very well that she would have muffed it. You're the practical woman! Well, you can rest on your laurels, darling! You'll have the whole place at your feet—beginning with your husband—who's been dreadfully bored without you. There!'

He put down his Jovian head, and rubbed his cheek tenderly against hers, till she turned round, and gave him the lightest of kisses,

'Was he an abominable correspondent?' he said, repentantly.

'Abominable!'

'Did you hate him?'

'Whenever I had time. When do you start on your cruise, Arthur?'

'Any time—some time—never!' he said, gaily. 'Give me that Capel Curig address, and I'll wire for the rooms this afternoon. I came to the conclusion this morning that the same yacht couldn't hold her ladyship and me.'

'Oh!—so she's been chastening you?' said Doris, well pleased.

Meadows nodded.

'The rod has not been spared—since Sunday. It was then she got tired of me. I mark the day, you see, almost the hour. My goodness!—if you're not always up to your form—epigrams, quotations—all pat—'

'She plucks you-without mercy. Down you slither into the

second class!' Doris's look sparkled.

'There you go—rejoicing in my humiliations!' said Meadows, putting an arm round the scoffer. 'I tell you, she proposes to write my next set of lectures for me. She gave me an outline of

them this morning.'

Then they both laughed together like children. And Doris, with her head on a strong man's shoulder, and a rough coat scrubbing her cheek, suddenly bethought her of the line—'Journeys end in lovers' meeting—' and was smitten with a secret wonder as to how much of her impulse to come north had been due to an altruistic concern for the Dunstable affairs, and how much to a firm determination to recapture Arthur from his Gloriana. But that doubt she would never reveal. It would be so bad for Arthur!

She rose to her feet.

'Where are they?'

'Lord and Lady Dunstable? Gone off to Dunkeld to find their solicitor and bring him back to meet Miss Wigram. They'll be home by tea. I'm to look after you.'

'Are we going to an hotel?'

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Meadows laughed immoderately.

'Come and look at your apartment, my dear. One of her ladyship's maids has been told off to look after you. As I expect you have arrived with little more than a comb-and-brush bag, there will be a good deal to do.'

Doris caught him by the coat-fronts.

'You don't mean to say that I shall be expected to dine to-night!

I have not brought an evening dress.'

'What does that matter? I met Miss Field in the passage, as I was coming in to you, and she said: "I see Mrs. Meadows has not brought much luggage. We can lend her anything she wants. I will send her a few of Rachel's tea-gowns to choose from."'

Doris's laugh was hysterical; then she sobered down.

'What time is it? Four o'clock. Oh, I wish Miss Wigram was here! You know, Lord Dunstable must go to town to-night! And Miss Wigram can't arrive till after the last train from here.'

'They know. They've ordered a special, to take Lord Dunstable and the solicitor to Edinburgh, to catch the midnight mail.'

'Oh, well-if you can bully the fates like that !-- 'said Doris, with a shrug. 'How did he take it ?'

Meadows' tone changed.

'It was a great blow. I thought it aged him.'
'Was she nice to him?' asked Doris, anxiously.

'Nicer than I thought she could be,' said Meadows, quietly.
'I heard her say to him—"I'm afraid it's been my fault, Harry."
And he took her hand, without a word.'

'I will not cry!' said Doris, pressing her hands on her eyes.
'If it comes right, it will do them such a world of good! Now show me my room.'

But in the hall, waiting to waylay them, they found Miss Field, beaming as usual.

'Everything is ready for you, dear Mrs. Meadows, and if you want anything you have only to ring. This way—'

'The ground-floor?' said Doris, rather mystified, as they followed.

'We have put you in what we call—for fun—our state-rooms. Various Royalties had them last year. They're in a special wing. We keep them for emergencies. And the fact is we haven't got another corner.'

Doris, in dismay, took the smiling lady by the arm. 'I can't live up to it! Please let us go to the inn.'

But Meadows and Miss Field mocked at her; and she was soon ushered into a vast bedroom, in the midst of which, on a Persian carpet, sat her diminutive bag, now empty. Various elegant 'confections' in the shape of tea-gowns and dressing-gowns littered the bed and the chairs. The toilet-table showed an array of coroneted brushes. As for the superb Empire bed, which had belonged to Queen Hortense, and was still hung with the original blue velvet sprinkled with golden bees, Doris eyed it with a firm hostility.

'We needn't sleep in it,' she whispered in Meadows' ear.

'There are two sofas.'

Meanwhile Miss Field and others flitted about, adding all the luxuries of daily use to the splendour of the rooms. Gardeners appeared bringing in flowers, and an anxious maid, on behalf of her ladyship, begged that Mrs. Meadows would change her travelling dress for a comfortable white tea-gown, before tea-time, suggesting another 'creation' in black and silver for dinner. Doris, frowning and reluctant, would have refused; but Miss Field said softly 'Won't you? Rachel will be so distressed if she mayn't do these little things for you. Of course she doesn't deserve it; but—'

'Oh yes-I'll put them on-if she likes,' said Doris, hurriedly.

'It doesn't matter.'

Miss Field laughed. 'I don't know where all these things come from,' she said, looking at the array. 'Rachel buys half of them for her maids, I should think—she never wears them. Well, now I shall leave you till tea-time. Tea will be on the lawn—Mr. Meadows knows where. By the way—' she looked, smiling, at Meadows—' they've put off the Duke. If you only knew what that means.'

She named a great Scotch name, the chief of the ancient house to which Lady Dunstable belonged. Miss Field described how this prince of Dukes paid a solemn visit every year to Franck Castle, and the eager solicitude—almost agitation—with which the visit was awaited, by Lady Dunstable in particular.

'You don't mean,' cried Doris, 'that there is anybody in the

whole world who frightens Lady Dunstable?'

'As she frightens us? Yes!—on this one day of the year we are all avenged. Rachel, metaphorically, sits on a stool and tries to please. To put off "the Duke" by telephone!—what a horrid indignity! But I've just inflicted it.'

Mattie Field smiled, and was just going away when she was

arrested by a timid question from Doris.

'Please—shall Arthur go down to Pitlochry and engage a room for Miss Wigram?'

Miss Field turned in amusement.

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'A room! Why, it's all ready! She is your lady-in-waiting.'

And taking Doris by the arm she led her to inspect a spacious apartment on the other side of a passage, where the Lady Alice or Lady Mary without whom Royal Highnesses do not move about the world was generally put up.

'I feel like Christopher Sly,' said Doris, surveying the scene, with her hands in her jacket pockets. 'So will she. But never mind!'

Events flowed on. Lord and Lady Dunstable came back by tea-time, bringing with them the solicitor, who was also the chief factor of their Scotch estate. Lord Dunstable looked old and wearied. He came to find Doris on the lawn, pressing her hand with murmured words of thanks.

'If that child Alice Wigram—of course I remember her well!—brings us information we can go upon, we shall be all right.

At least there's hope. My poor boy! Anyway, we can never be

grateful enough to you.'

As for Lady Dunstable, the large circle which gathered for tea under a group of Scotch firs talked indeed, since Franick Castle existed for that purpose, but they talked without a leader. Their hostess sat silent and sombre, with thoughts evidently far away. She took no notice of Meadows whatever, and his attempts to draw her fell flat. A neighbour had walked over, bringing with him-maliciously-a Radical M.P. whose views on the Scotch land question would normally have struck fire and fury from Lady Dunstable. She scarcely recognised his name, and he and the Under-Secretary launched into the most despicable land heresies under her very nose—unrebuked. She had not an epigram to throw at anyone. But her eyes never failed to know where Doris Meadows was, and indeed, though no one but the two or three initiated knew why, Doris was in some mysterious but accepted way the centre of the party. Everybody spoiled her; everybody smiled upon her. The white tea-gown which she wore—a miracle of delicate embroidery-had never suited Lady Dunstable; it suited Doris to perfection. Under her own simple hat, her eyes and they were very fine eyes—shone with a soft and dancing humour. It was all absurd—her being there—her dress—this tongue-tied hostess—and these agreeable men who made much of her! She must get Arthur out of it as soon as possible, and they would look

back upon it and laugh. But for the moment it was pleasant, it was stimulating! She found herself arguing about the new novels, and standing at bay against a whole group of clever folk who were tearing Mr. Augustus John and other gods of her idolatry to pieces. She was not shy; she never really had been; and to find that she could talk as well as other people—or most other people—even in these critical circles, excited her. The circle round her grew; and Meadows, standing on the edge of it, watched her with astonished eyes.

The northern evening sank into a long and glowing twilight. The hills stood in purple against a tawny west, and the smoke from the little town in the valley rose clear and blue into air already autumnal. The guests of Franick had scattered in twos and threes over the gardens and the moor, while Doris, her host and hostess, and the solicitor, sat and waited for Alice Wigram. She came with the evening train, tired, dusty, and triumphant; and the information she brought with her was more than enough to go upon. The past of Elena Flink—poor lady!—shone luridly out; and even the countenance of the solicitor cleared. As for Lord Dunstable, he grasped the girl by both hands.

'My dear child, what you have done for us! Ah, if your father

were here!'

And bending over her, with the courtly grace of an old man, he kissed her on the brow. Alice Wigram flushed, turning involuntarily towards Lady Dunstable.

'Rachel !-don't we owe her everything,' said Lord Dunstable with emotion-- 'her and Mrs. Meadows? But for them, our boy

might have wrecked his life.'

'He appears to have been a most extraordinary fool!' said Lady Dunstable with energy:—a recrudescence of the natural woman, which was positively welcome to everybody. And it did not prevent the passage of some embarrassed but satisfactory words between Herbert Dunstable's mother and Alice Wigram, after Lady Dunstable had taken her latest guest to 'Lady Mary's' room, bidding her go straight to bed, and be waited on.

Lord Dunstable and the lawyer departed after dinner to meet their special train at Perth. Lady Dunstable, with variable spirits, kept the evening going, sometimes in a brown study, sometimes as brilliant and pugnacious as ever. Doris slipped out of the drawingroom once or twice to go and gossip with Alice Wigram, who was lying under silken coverings, inclined to gentle moralising on the splendours of the great, and much petted by Miss Field and the housekeeper.

'How nice you look!' said the girl shyly, on one occasion, as Doris came stealing in to her. 'I never saw such a pretty gown!'

'Not bad!' said Doris complacently, throwing a glance at the large mirror near. It was still the white tea-gown, for she had firmly declined to sample anything else, being in truth well aware that Arthur's eyes approved both it and her in it.

'Lord Dunstable has been so kind,' whispered Miss Wigram.
'He said I must always henceforth look upon him as a kind of guardian. Of course I should never let him give me a farthing!'

'Why no, that's the kind of thing one couldn't do!' said Doris with decision. 'But there are plenty of other ways of being nice. 'Well—here we all are, as happy as larks; and what we've really done, I suppose, is to take a woman's character away, and give her another push to perdition.'

'She hadn't any character!' cried Alice Wigram indignantly.

'And she would have gone to perdition without us, and taken that poor youth with her. Oh, I know, I know! But morals are a great puzzle to me. However, I firmly remind myself of that "one in the eye," and then all my doubts depart. Good-night. Sleep well! You know very well that I should have shirked it if it hadn't been for you!'

A little later the Meadowses stood together at the open window of their room, which led by a short flight of steps to a flowering garden below. All Franick had gone to bed, and this wing in which the 'state-rooms' were, seemed to be remote from the rest of the house. They were alone; the night was balmy; and there was a flood of secret joy in Doris's veins which gave her a charm, a beguilement Arthur had never seen in her before. She was more woman, and therefore more divine! He could hardly recall her as the careful housewife, harassed by lack of pence, knitting her brows over her butcher's books, mending endless socks, and trying to keep the nose of a lazy husband to the grindstone. All that seemed to have vanished. This white sylph was pure romance—pure joy. He saw her anew; he loved her anew.

'Why did you look so pretty to-night? You little witch!' he murmured in her ear, as he held her close to him.

'Arthur!'—she drew herself away from him. 'Did I look pretty? Honour bright!'

'Delicious! How often am I to say it?'

'You'd better not. Don't wake the devil in me, Arthur! It's all this tea-gown. If you go on like this, I shall have to buy one like it.'

'Buy a dozen!' he said joyously. 'Look there, Doris-you see

that path? Let's go on to the moor a little.'

Out they crept, like truant children, through the wood-path and out upon the moor. Meadows had brought a shawl, and spread it on a rock, full under the moonlight. There they sat, close together, feeling all the goodness and glory of the night, drinking in the scents of heather and fern, the sounds of plashing water and gently moving winds. Above them, the vault of heaven and the friendly stars; below them, the great hollow of the valley, the scattered lights, the sounds of distant trains.

'She didn't kiss me when she said good-night!' said Doris suddenly. 'She wasn't the least sentimental—or ashamed or grateful! Having said what was necessary, she let it alone.

She's a real lady—though rather a savage. I like her!'

'Who are you talking of? Lady Dunstable? I had forgotten all about her. All the same, darling, I should like to know what made you do all this for a woman you said you detested!'

'I did detest her. I shall probably detest her again. Leopards don't change their spots, do they? But I shan't—fear her any more!'

Something in her tone arrested Meadows' attention.

'What do you mean?'

'Oh, what I say!' cried Doris, drawing herself a little from him, with a hand on his shoulder. 'I shall never fear her, or anyone, any more. I'm safe! Why did I do it? Do you really want to know? I did it—because—I was so sorry for her—poor silly woman,—who can't get on with her own son! Arthur!—if our son doesn't love me better than hers loves her—you may kill me, dear, and welcome!'

'Doris! There is something in your voice—! What are you hiding from me?'

But as to the rest of that conversation under the moon, let those imagine it who may have followed with sympathy this short story.

## MR. AND MRS. FIELDS.1

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If at such a time as this a man of my generation finds himself on occasion revert to our ancient peace in some soreness of confusion between envy and pity, I know well how best to clear up the matter for myself at least and to recover a workable relation with the blessing in eclipse. I recover it in some degree with pity, as I say, by reason of the deep illusions and fallacies in which the great glare of the present seems to show us as then steeped; there being always. we can scarce not feel, something pathetic in the recoil from fond fatuities. When these are general enough, however, they make their own law and impose their own scheme; they go on, with their fine earnestness, to their utmost limit, and the best of course are those that go on longest. When I think that the innocent confidence cultivated over a considerable part of the earth, over all the parts most offered to my own view, was to last well-nigh my whole lifetime, I cannot deny myself a large respect for it, cannot but see that if our illusion was complete we were at least insidiously and artfully beguiled. What we had taken so actively to believing in was to bring us out at the brink of the abyss, yet as I look back I see nothing but our excuses; I cherish at any rate the image of their bright plausibility. We really, we nobly, we insanely (as it can only now strike us) held ourselves comfortably clear of the worst horror that in the past had attended the life of nations, and to the grounds of this conviction we could point with lively assurance. They all come back, one now recognises, to a single supporting proposition, to the question of when in the world peace had so prodigiously flourished. It had been broken, and was again briefly broken, within our view, but only as if to show with what force and authority it could freshly assert itself; whereby it grew to look too increasingly big, positively too massive even in its blandness, for interruptions not to be afraid of it.

It is in the light of this memory, I confess, that I bend fondly over the age—so prolonged, I have noted, as to yield ample space for the exercise—in which any challenge to our faith fell below the sweet serenity of it. I see that by any measure I might personally have applied the American, or at least the Northern, state of mind and of life that began to develop just after the Civil War formed the headspring of our assumption. Odd enough might it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1915, by Henry James, in the United States of America.

have indeed appeared that this conception should need four years of free carnage to launch it; yet what did that mean, after all, in New York and Boston, into which places remembrance reads the complacency soon to be the most established-what did that mean unless that we had exactly shed the bad possibilities, were publicly purged of the dreadful disease which had come within an inch of being fatal to us, and were by that token warranted sound for ever. superlatively safe ?-as we could see that during the previous existence of the country we had been but comparatively so. The breathless campaign of Sadowa, which occurred but a year after our own sublime conclusion had been sealed by Lee's surrender, enlarged the prospect much rather than ruffled it, and though we had to confess that the siege of Paris, four years later, was a false note, it was drowned in the solidification of Germany, so true, so resounding and for all we then suspected to the contrary so portentously pacific, a one. How could peace not flourish, moreover, when wars either took only seven weeks or lasted but a summer and scarce more than a long-drawn autumn ?-- the siege of Paris dragging out, to our pitying sense, at the time, but raised before all the rest of us, preparing food-succour, could well turn round, and with the splendid recovery of France to follow so close on her amputation that violence fairly struck us as moving away confounded. So it was that our faith was confirmed-violence sitting down again with averted face, and the conquests we felt the truly golden ones spreading and spreading behind its back.

It was not perhaps in the purest gold of the matter that we pretended to deal in the New York and the Boston to which I have referred, but if I wish to catch again the silver tinkle at least, straining my ear for it through the sounds of to-day, I have but to recall the dawn of those associations that seemed then to promise everything, and the last declining ray of which rests, just long enough to be caught, on the benign figure of Mrs. Fields, of the latter city, recently deceased and leaving behind her much of the material out of which legend obligingly grows. She herself had the good fortune to assist, during all her later years, at an excellent case of such growth, for which nature not less than circumstance had perfectly fitted her—she was so intrinsically charming a link with the past and abounded so in the pleasure of reference and the grace of fidelity. She helped the present, that of her own actuality, to think well of her producing conditions, to think better of them

than of many of those that open for our wonderment to-day; what a note of distinction they were able to contribute, she moved us to remark, what a quality of refinement they appeared to have encouraged, what a minor form of the monstrous modern noise they seemed to have been consistent with! The truth was of course very decidedly that the seed I speak of, the seed that has flowered into legend, and with the thick growth of which her domestic scene was quite embowered, had been sown in soil peculiarly grateful and favoured by pleasing accidents. The personal beauty of her younger years, long retained and not even at the end of such a stretch of life quite lost; the exquisite native tone and mode of appeal, which anciently we perhaps thought a little 'precious,' but from which the distinctive and the preservative were in time to be snatched, a greater extravagance supervening; the signal sweetness of temper and lightness of tact, in fine, were things that prepared together the easy and infallible exercise of what I have called her references. It adds greatly to one's own measure of the accumulated years to have seen her reach the age at which she could appear to the younger world about her to 'go back' wonderfully far, to be almost the only person extant who did, and to owe much of her value to this delicate aroma of antiquity. My title for thus speaking of her is that of being myself still extant enough to have known by ocular and other observational evidence what it was she went back to and why the connection should consecrate her. Every society that amounts, as we say, to anything has its own annals, and luckless any to which this cultivation of the sense of a golden age that has left a precious deposit happens to be closed. A local present of proper pretensions has in fact to invent a set of antecedents, something in the nature of an epoch either of giants or of fairies, when literal history may in this respect have failed it, in order to look other temporal claims of a like complexion in the face. Boston, all letterless and unashamed as she verily seems to-day, needs luckily, for recovery of self-respect, no resort to such make-believes—to legend, that is, before the fact; all her legend is well after it, absolutely upon it, the large, firm fact, and to the point of covering, and covering yet again, every discernible inch of it. I felt myself during the half-dozen years of my younger time spent thereabouts just a little late for history perhaps, though well before, or at least well abreast of, poetry; whereas now it all densely foreshortens, it positively all melts beautifully together, and I square myself in the state of mind of an authority not to be questioned.

In other words, my impression of the golden age was a first-hand one, not a second nor a third, and since those with whom I shared it have dropped off one by one—I can think of but two or three of the distinguished, the intelligent and participant, that is, as left—I fear there is no arrogance of authority that I am not capable of

taking on.

James T. Fields must have had about him when I first knew him much of the freshness of the season, but I remember thinking him invested with a stately past; this as an effect of the spell cast from an early, or at least from my early, time by the 'Ticknor, Reed and Fields 'at the bottom of every title-page of the period that conveyed, however shyly, one of the finer presumptions. I look back with wonder to what would seem a precocious interest in title-pages, and above all into the mysterious or behind-the-scenes world suggested by publishers' names-which, in their various collocations, had a colour and a character beyond even those of authors, even those of books themselves; an anomaly that I seek not now to fathom, but which the brilliant Mr. Fields, as I aspiringly saw him, had the full benefit of, not less when I first came to know him than before. Mr. Reed, Mr. Ticknor, were never at all to materialise for me; the former was soon to forfeit any pertinence, and the latter, so far as I was concerned, never so much as peeped round the titular screen. Mr. Fields on the other hand planted himself well before that expanse; not only had he shone betimes with the reflected light of Longfellow and Lowell, of Emerson and Hawthorne and Whittier, but to meet him was, for an ingenuous young mind, to find that he was understood to return with interest any borrowed glory and to keep the social, or I should perhaps rather say the sentimental, account straight with each of his stars. What he truly shed back of course was a prompt sympathy and conversability; it was in this social and personal colour that he emerged from the mere imprint, and was alone, I gather, among the American publishers of the time in emerging. He had a conception of possibilities of relation with his authors and contributors that I judge no other member of his body in all the land to have had, and one easily makes out for that matter that his firm was all but alone in improving, to this effect of amenity, on the crude relation-crude I mean on the part of the author. Few were our native authors, and the friendly Boston house had gathered them in almost all: the other, the New York and Philadelphia houses (practically all we had), were friendly, I make out at this distance of time, to the public in particular, whose

appetite they met to abundance with cheap reprints of the products of the London press, but were doomed to represent in a lower, sometimes indeed in the very lowest, degree the element of consideration for the British original. The British original had during that age been reduced to the solatium of publicity pure and simple; knowing, or at least presuming, that he was read in America by the fact of his being appropriated, he could himself appropriate but the

complacency of this consciousness.

To the Boston constellation then almost exclusively belonged the higher complacency, as one may surely call it, of being able to measure with some closeness the good purpose to which they glittered. The Fieldses could imagine so much happier a scene that the fond fancy they brought to it seems to flush it all, as I look back, with the richest tints. I so describe the sweet influence because by the time I found myself taking more direct notice the singularly graceful young wife had become, so to speak, a highly noticeable feature; her beautiful head and hair and smile and voice (we wonder if a social circle worth naming was ever ruled by a voice without charm of quality) were so many happy items in a general array. Childless, what is vulgarly called unencumbered, addicted to every hospitality and every benevolence, addicted to the cultivation of talk and wit and to the ingenious multiplication of such ties as could link the upper half of the title-page with the lower, their vivacity, their curiosity, their mobility, the felicity of their instinct for any manner of gathered relic, remnant or tribute, conspired to their helping the 'literary world' roundabout to a self-consciousness more fluttered, no doubt, yet also more romantically resolute. To turn attention from any present hour to a past that has become distant is always to have to look through overgrowths and reckon with perversions; but even so the domestic, the waterside museum of the Fieldses hangs there clear to me; their salon positively, so far as salons were in the old Puritan city dreamt of-by which I mean allowing for a couple of exceptions not here to be lingered on. We knew in those days little of collectors; the name of the class, however, already much impressed us, and in that long and narrow drawing-room of odd dimensions-unfortunately somewhat sacrificed, I frankly confess, as American drawing-rooms are apt to be, to its main aperture or command of outward resonance—one learned for the first time how vivid a collection might be. Nothing would reconcile me at this hour to any attempt to resolve back into its elements the brave effect of the exhibition, in which the inclusive

range of 'old' portrait and letter, of old pictorial and literal autograph and other material gage or illustration, of old original edition or still more authentically consecrated current copy, disposed itself over against the cool sea-presence of the innermost great basin of Boston's port. Most does it come to me, I think, that the enviable pair went abroad with freedom and frequency, and that the inscribed and figured walls were a record of delightful adventure, a display as of votive objects attached by restored and grateful mariners to the nearest shrine. To go abroad, to be abroad (for the return thence was to the advantage, after all, only of those who couldn't so proceed) represented success in life, and our couple were immensely successful. Dickens at that time went a great way with us, the best of him falling after this fashion well within the compass of our life; and Thackeray, for my own circle, went, I think, a greater way still, even if already, at the season I recall, to a more ghostly effect and as a presence definitely immortalised. The register of his two American visits was piously, though without the least solemnity, kept in Charles Street; which assisted, however, at Dickens's second coming to the States and a comparatively profane contemporaneity. I was not to see him there; I was, save for a brief moment elsewhere, but to hear him and to wonder at his strange histrionic force in public; nevertheless the waterside museum never ceased to retain, for my earnest recognition, certain fine vibrations and dying echoes of all that episode. I liked to think of the house, I couldn't do without thinking of it, as the great man's safest harbourage through the tremendous gale of those even more leave-taking appearances, as fate was to appoint, than we then understood; and this was a fact about it, to my taste, which made all sorts of other, much more prolonged and reiterated, facts comparatively subordinate and flat. The single drawback was that the intimacies and privileges it witnessed for in that most precious connection seemed scarce credible; the inimitable presence was anecdotically enough attested, but I somehow rather missed the evidential sample, 'a feather, an eagle's feather,' as Browning says, which I should, ideally speaking, have picked up on the stairs.

I doubtless meanwhile found it the most salient of all the circumstances that *The Atlantic Monthly* had at no ancient date virtually come into being under the fostering roof, and that a charm, or at least a felt soft weight, attached to one's thinking of its full-flushed earlier form as very much edited from there. There its

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contributors, or many of them, dined and supped and went to tea, and there above all, in many a case, was almost gloriously revealed to them the possible relation between such amenities and hospitalities and the due degree of inspiration. It would take me too far to say how I dispose of J. R. Lowell in this reconstruction, the very first editor as he was, if I mistake not, of the supremely sympathetic light miscellany that I figure; but though I have here to pick woefully among my reminiscences I must spare a word or two for another presence too intimately associated with the scene and too constantly predominant there to be overlooked. Atlantic was for years practically the sole organ of that admirable writer and wit, that master of almost every form of observational, of meditational and of humorous ingenuity, the author of 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table 'and of 'Elsie Venner.' Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes had been from the first the great 'card 'of the new recueil, and this with due deference to the fact that Emerson and Longfellow and Whittier, that Lowell himself and Hawthorne and Francis Parkman, were prone to figure in no other periodical (speaking thus of course but of the worthies originally drawn upon). Mr. Longfellow was frequent and remarkably even, neither rising above nor falling below a level ruled as straight as a line for a copybook; Emerson on the other hand was rare, but, to make up for it, sometimes surprising; and when I ask myself what best distinction the magazine owed to our remaining hands I of course at once remember that it put forth the whole later array of 'The Biglow Papers' and that the impressions and reminiscences of England gathered up by Hawthorne into 'Our Old Home' had enjoyed their first bloom of publicity from month to month under Fields's protection. These things drew themselves out in delightful progression, to say nothing of other cognate felicities—everything that either Lowell or Hawthorne published in those days making its first appearance, inveterately, in the Atlantic pages. Lowell's serious as well as his hilarious, that is his broadly satiric, verse was pressed into their service; though of his literary criticism, I recall, the magazine was less avid—little indeed, at the same time, as it could emulate in advance its American-born fellows of to-day in apparent dread of that insidious appeal to attention. Which remarks, as I make them, but throw into relief for me the admirable vivacity and liberality of Dr. Holmes's Atlantic career, quite warranting, as they again flicker and glow, no matter what easy talk about a golden age. 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table,'

the American contribution to literature, that I can recall, most nearly meeting the conditions and enjoying the fortune of a classic, quite sufficiently accounts, I think, for our sense not only at the time, but during a long stretch of the subsequent, that we had there the most precious of the metals in the very finest fusion. Such perhaps was not entirely the air in which we saw 'Elsie Venner' bathed—since if this too was a case of the shining substance of the author's mind, so extraordinarily agile within its own circle of content, the application of the admirable engine was yet not perhaps so happy; in spite of all of which nothing would induce me now to lower our then claim for this fiction as the charmingest of the 'old' American group, the romances of Hawthorne of course

always excepted.

The new American novel-for that was preparing-had at the season I refer to scarce glimmered into view; but its first seeds were to be sown very exactly in Atlantic soil, where my superexcellent friend and confrère W. D. Howells soon began editorially to cultivate them. I should find myself crossing in this reference the edge of a later period were I moved here at all to stiff discriminations; which I am so far from being that I absolutely like to remember, pressing out elated irony in it, that the magazine seemed pleased to profit by Howells, whether as wise editor or delightful writer, only up to the verge of his broadening out into mastership. He broadened gradually, and far-away back numbers exhibit the tentative light footprints that were to become such firm and confident steps; but affectionate appreciation quite consciously assisted at a process in which it could mark and measure each stage—up to the time, that is, when the process quite outgrew, as who should say, the walls of the drill-ground itself. By this time many things, as was inevitable—things not of the earlier tradition -had come to pass; not the least of these being that J. T. Fields, faithfully fathering man, had fallen for always out of the circle. What was to follow his death made for itself other connections, many of which indeed had already begun; but what I think of in particular, as his beguiled loose chronicler straightening out a little -though I wouldn't for the world overmuch-the confusion of old and doubtless in some cases rather shrunken importances, what I especially run to earth is that there were forms of increase which the 'original' organ might have seemed to grow rather weak in the knees for carrying. I pin my remembrance, however, only to the Fieldses-that is, above all, to his active relation to the affair,

and to the image left with me of guiding and nursing pleasure shown always as the intensity of personal pleasure. No confident proprietor can ever have drawn more happiness from a cherished and computed value than he drew from Dr. Holmes's success, which likewise provided so blest a medium for the 'Autocrat's' own expansive spirit that I see the whole commerce and inspiration in the cheerful waterside light. I find myself couple together the two Charles Street houses, though even with most weight of consideration for that where 'The Autocrat,' 'The Professor,' 'Elsie Venner,' and the long and bright succession of the unsurpassed Boston pièces de circonstance in verse, to say nothing of all the eagerest and easiest and funniest, all the most winged and kept-up, most illustrational and suggestional, table-talk that ever was, sprang smiling to life. Ineffaceably present to me is all that atmosphere, though I enjoyed it of course at the time but as the most wonderstruck and most indulged of extreme juniors; and in the mere ghostly breath of it old unspeakable vibrations revive. I find innumerable such for instance between the faded leaves of 'Sounding from the Atlantic,' and in one of the papers there reprinted, 'My Hunt for the Captain' in especial, the recital of the author's search among the Virginia battlefields for his gallant wounded son; which, with its companions, evokes for me also at this end of time, and mere fond memory aiding, a greater group of sacred images than I may begin to name, as well as the charm and community of that overlooking of the wide inlet which so corrected the towniness: The 'Autocrat's' insuperable instinct for the double sense of words, when the drollery of the collocation was pointed enough, has its note in the title of the volume I have just mentioned (where innumerable other neglected notes would respond again, I imagine, to the ear a bit earnestly applied); but the clue that has lengthened out so far is primarily attached, no doubt, to the eloquence of the final passage of the paper in which the rejoicing father, back from his anxious quest, sees Boston bristle again on his lifelong horizon, the immemorial signs multiply, the great dome of the State House rise not a whit less high than before, and the Bunker Hill obelisk point as sharply as ever its bevelled capstone against the sky.

The charm I thus rake out of the period, and the aspect of the Fieldses as bathed in that soft medium—so soft after the long internecine harshness—gloss over to my present view every troubled face of my young relation with the *Atlantic*; the poor pathetic faces, as they now pass before me, being troubled for more reasons

than I can recall, but above all, I think, because from the first I found 'writing for the magazines' an art still more difficult than delightful. Yet I doubt whether I wince at this hour any more than I winced on the spot at hearing it quoted from this proprietor of the first of those with which I effected an understanding that such a strain of pessimism in the would-be picture of life had an odd, had even a ridiculous, air on the part of an author with his mother's milk scarce vet dry on his lips. It was to my amused W. D. H. that I owed this communication as I was to owe him ever such numberless invitations to partake of his amusement: and I trace back to that with interest the first note of the warning against not 'ending happily' that was for the rest of my literary life to be sounded in my ear with a good faith of which the very terms failed to reach me intelligibly enough to correct my apparent perversity. I laboured always under the conviction that to terminate a fond aesthetic effort in felicity had to be as much one's obeyed law as to begin it and carry it on in the same; whereby how could one be anything less than bewildered at the non-recognition of one's inveterately plotted climax of expression and intensity? One went so far as literally to claim that in a decent production—such as one at least hoped any particular specimen of one's art to show for—the terminal virtue, driven by the whole momentum gathered on the way, had to be most expressional of one's subject, and thereby more fortunately pointed than whatever should have gone before. I remember clinging to that measure of the point really made even in the tender dawn of the bewilderment I glance at and which I associate with the general precarious element in those first Atlantic efforts. It really won me to an anxious kindness for Mr. Fields that though finding me precociously dismal he vet indulgently suffered me-and this not the less for my always feeling that Howells, during a season his sub-editor, must more or less have intervened with a good result.

The great, the reconciling thing, however, was the easy medium, the generally teeming Fields atmosphere, out of which possibilities that ravished me increasingly sprang; though doubtless these may speak in the modern light quite preponderantly of the young observer's and devourer's irrepressible need to appreciate—as compared, I mean, with his need to be appreciated, and a due admixture of that recognised. I preserve doubtless imperfectly the old order of these successions, the thrill sometimes but blandly transmitted, sometimes directly snatched, the presented occasion

and the rather ruefully missed, the apprehension that in such a circle-with centre and circumference, in Charles Street, coming well together despite the crowded, the verily crammed, space between them-the brush of aesthetic, of social, of cultural suggestion worked, when most lively, at the end of a long handle that had stretched all the way over from Europe. How it struck me as working, I remember well, on a certain afternoon when the great Swedish singer Christine Nilsson, then young and beautiful and glorious, was received among us-that is, when she stood between a pair of the windows of the Fields museum, to which she was for the moment the most actual recruit, and accepted the homage of extremely presented and fluttered persons, not one of whom could fail to be dazzled by her extraordinary combination of different kinds of lustre. Then there was the period of Charles Fechter, who had come over from London, whither he had originally come from Paris, to establish a theatre in Boston, where he was to establish it to no great purpose, alas! and who during the early brightness of his legend seemed to create for us on the same spot an absolute community of interests with the tremendously knowing dilettanti to whom he referred. He referred most of course to Dickens, who had directed him straight upon Charles Street under a benediction that was at first to do much for him, launch him violently and to admiration, even if he was before long, no doubt, to presume overmuch on its virtue. Highly effective too in this connection, while the first portents lasted, was the bustling virtue of the Fieldses -on that ground and on various others indeed directly communicated from Dickens's own, and infinitely promoting the delightful roused state under which we grasped at the aesthetic freshness of Fechter's Hamlet in particular. Didn't we react with the finest collective and perceptive intensity against the manner of our great and up to that time unquestioned exponent of the part, Edwin Booth ?-who, however he might come into his own again after the Fechter flurry, never recovered real credit, it was interesting to note, for the tradition of his 'head,' his facial and physiognomic make-up, of a sudden quite luridly revealed as provincial, as formed even to suggest the powerful support rendered the Ophelia of Pendennis's Miss Fotheringay. I remember, in fine, thinking that the emissary of Dickens and the fondling of the Fieldses, to express it freely, seemed to play over our classic, our livid ringleted image a sort of Scandinavian smoky torch, out of the lurid flicker of which it never fully emerged.

These are trivial and perhaps a bit tawdry illustrations: but there were plenty of finer accidents: projected assurances and encountered figures and snatched impressions, such as naturally make at present but a faded show and yet not one of which has lost its distinctness for my own infatuated piety. I see now what an overcharged glory could attach to the fact that Anthony Trollope, in his habit as he lived, was at a given moment literally dining in Charles Street. I can do justice to the rich notability of my partaking of Sunday supper there in company with Mrs. Beecher Stowe and making out to my satisfaction that if she had, of intensely local New England type as she struck me as being, not a little of the nonchalance of real renown, she 'took in 'circumjacent objects and more agitated presences with the true economy of genius. I even invest with the colour of romance, or I did at the time, the bestowal on me, for temporary use, of the precursory pages of Matthew Arnold's 'Essays in Criticism,' honourably smirched by the American compositor's fingers, from which the Boston edition of that volume, with the classicism of its future awaiting it, had just been set up. I can still recover the rapture with which, then suffering under the effects of a bad accident, I lay all day on a sofa in Ashburton Place and was somehow transported, as in a shining silvery dream, to London, to Oxford, to the French Academy, to Languedoc, to Brittany, to ancient Greece; all under the fingered spell of the little loose smutty London sheets. And I somehow even felt in my face the soft sidewind of that 'arranging' for punctualities of production of the great George Eliot, with whom our friends literally conversed, to the last credibility, every time they went to London, and thanks to whose intimate confidence in them doesn't it seem to me that I enjoyed the fragrant foretaste of Middlemarch?-roundabout which I patch together certain confused reminiscences of a weekly periodical, a younger and plainer sister of the Atlantic, its title now lost to me and the activity of which was all derivative, consisting as it did of bang-on-the-hour English first-fruits, 'advance' felicities of the London press. This must all have meant an elated season during which, in the still prolonged absence of an international copyright law, the favour of early copy, the alertness of postal transmission, in consideration of the benefit of the quickened fee, was to make international harmony prevail. I retain but an inferential sense of it all, yet gilded again to memory by perusals of Trollope, of Wilkie Collins, of Charles Reade, of others of the then distinguished, quite beneath their immediate rejoicing eve and with double the

amount of quality we had up to that time extracted oozing gratefully

through their pores. Mrs. Fields was to survive her husband for many years and was to flourish as a copious second volume—the connection licences the free figure—of the work anciently issued. She had a further and further, a very long life, all of infinite goodness and grace, and, while ever insidiously referring to the past, could not help meeting the future at least half-way. And all her implications were gay, since no one so finely sentimental could be noted as so humorous: just as no feminine humour was perhaps ever so unmistakingly directed, and no state of amusement, amid quantities of reminiscence, perhaps ever so merciful. It was not that she could think no ill, but that she couldn't see others thinking it, much less doing it: which was quite compatible too with her being as little trapped by any presumptuous form of it as if she had had its measure to the last fineness. It became a case of great felicity; she was all the gentle referee and servant, the literary and social executor, so to speak, of a hundred ghosts, but the scroll of her vivid commission had never been rolled up, so that it hung there open to whatever more names and pleas might softly inscribe themselves. She kept her whole connection insistently modern, in the sense that all new recruits to it found themselves in concert with the charming old tone, and, only wanting to benefit by its authority, were much more affected by it than it was perhaps fortunately in certain cases affected by them. Beautiful the instance of an exquisite person for whom the mere grace of unimpaired duration, drawing out and out the grace implanted, established an importance that she never lifted so much as a finger to claim, and the manner of which was that, while people surrounded her, admiringly and tenderly, only to do in their own interest all the reminding, she was herself ever as little as possible caught in the more or less invidious act. It was they who preferred her possibilities of allusion to any aspect of the current jostle, and her sweetness under their pressure made her consentingly modern even while the very sound of the consent was as the voice of a time so much less strident.

My sense of all this later phase was able on occasion to renew itself, but perhaps never did so in happier fashion than when Mrs. Fields, revisiting England, as she continued to embrace every opportunity of doing, kindly travelled down to see me in the country, bringing with her a young friend of great talent whose prevailing presence in her life had come little by little to give it something

like a new centre. To speak in a mere parenthesis of Miss Jewett. mistress of an art of fiction all her own, even though of a minor compass, and surpassed only by Hawthorne as producer of the most finished and penetrating of the numerous 'short stories' that have the domestic life of New England for their general and their doubtless somewhat lean subject, is to do myself, I feel, the violence of suppressing a chapter of appreciation that I should long since somewhere have found space for. Her admirable gift, that artistic sensibility in her which rivalled the rare personal. that sense for the finest kind of truthful rendering, the sober and tender note, the temperately touched, whether in the ironic or the pathetic, would have deserved some more pointed commemoration than I judge her beautiful little quantum of achievement, her free and high, yet all so generously subdued character, a sort of elegance of humility or fine flame of modesty, with her remarkably distinguished outward stamp, to have called forth before the premature and overdarkened close of her young course of production. She had come to Mrs. Fields as an adoptive daughter, both a sharer and a sustainer, and nothing could more have warmed the ancient faith of their confessingly a bit disoriented countryman than the association of the elder and the younger lady in such an emphasised susceptibility. Their reach together was of the firmest and easiest, and I verily remember being struck with the stretch of wing that the spirit of Charles Street could bring off on finding them all fragrant of a recent immersion in the country life of France, where admiring friends had opened to them iridescent vistas that made it by comparison a charity they should show the least dazzle from my so much ruder display. I preserve at any rate the memory of a dazzle corresponding, or in other words of my gratitude for their ready apprehension of the greatness of big 'composed' Sussex, which we explored together almost to extravagance—the lesson to my own sense all remaining that of how far the pure, the peculiarly pure, old Boston spirit, old even in these women of whom one was miraculously and the other familiarly young, could travel without a scrap of loss of its ancient immunity to set against its gain of vivacity.

There was vivacity of a new sort somehow in the fact that the elder of my visitors, the elder in mere calculable years, had come fairly to cultivate, as it struck me, a personal resemblance to the great George Eliot—and this but through the quite lawful art of causing a black lace mantilla to descend from her head and happily

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consort with a droop of abundant hair, a formation of brow and a general fine benignity: things that at once markedly recalled the countenance of Sir Frederick Burton's admirable portrait of the author of 'Romola' and made it a charming anomaly that such remains of beauty should match at all a plainness not to be blinked even under the play of Sir Frederick's harmonising crayon. Other amplified aspects of the whole legend, as I have called it, I was afterwards to see presented on its native scene-whereby it comes back to me that Sara Jewett's brave ghost would resent my too roughly Bostonising her: there hangs before me such a picture of her right setting, the antique dignity (as antiquity counts thereabouts) of a clear colonial house well over the Maine border of Massachusetts, and a day spent amid the very richest local revelations. These things were not so much of like as of equally flushed complexion with two or three occasions of view, at the same memorable time, of Mrs. Fields's happy alternative home on the shining Massachusetts shore, where I seem to catch in latest afternoon light the quite final form of all the pleasant evidence. To say which, however, is still considerably to foreshorten; since there supervenes for me with force as the very last word, or the one conclusive for myself at least, a haunted little feast as of ghosts, if not of skeletons, at the banquet, with the image of that immemorial and inextinguishable lady Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, the most evidential and most eminent presence of them all, as she rises in her place, under the extremity of appeal, to declaim a little quaveringly, but ever so gallantly, that 'Battle-hymn of the Republic' which she had caused to be chanted half a century before and still could accompany with a real breadth of gesture, her great clap of hands and indication of the complementary step, on the triumphant line 'Be swift my hands to welcome him, be jubilant my feet!' The geniality of this performance swept into our collective breast again the whole matter of my record, which I thus commend to safe spiritual keeping.

HENRY JAMES.

## A GREAT SOLDIER ON HIS BATTLES.

BY DR. W. H. FITCHETT.

[This is the centenary year of Waterloo. On Friday, June 18 last, it was exactly a hundred years since what Byron calls 'King-making Waterloo' was fought. The present war so far outruns in scale all previous wars known to history that it seems as if Waterloo, when measured by the foot-rule, dwindles to very small dimensions. And yet it remains, as Wellington himself described it, as 'perhaps the most important single military event in modern history'—a battle which, 'more than any other ever fought, has contributed to the peace of the world.' Much centenary literature will appear during these months, and this article and its continuation are designed to bring to a focus all the gossip about Wellington, the 'recollections' of conversations with him, which have made their appearance since he died. The reader will get, as far as is possible, the views of the greatest soldier the British race has yet produced about his own battles and sieges.—
Ed. 'Cornhill.']

When Wellington landed at Dover at the end of 1818, having finished his great task in France, he was the most influential and the most widely trusted figure on the human landscape of that day; and he was only forty-nine! He was the one great and successful soldier England had produced since Marlborough, and Marlborough had amongst the French generals with whom he fought no Napoleon, nor was Blenheim to be compared with Waterloo. On the Continent Wellington had no living rival in military fame. Blücher was an obstinate and loyal fighter; but Ligny, unlike Waterloo, was a defeat, one of many defeats which Blücher had suffered. The Archduke Charles for one dazzling hour seemed Napoleon's equal, and amongst Wellington's favourite books that of the Archduke held a high place. But Aspern was only half a victory; and it was cancelled by the swift-following defeat at Wagram.

Wellington in the Peninsula had met, and defeated, all Napoleon's generals in turn, from Junot to Masséna and Soult; and in the shallow valley outside Brussels he had faced Napoleon in person—Napoleon, the greatest soldier since Cæsar—and had beaten him.

His fierce genius for battle, in which Italian subtlety and Corsican energy met, had been foiled and defeated by the cooler skill and the loftier spirit of his British rival. Napoleon had disappeared beyond the sea-horizon; a solitary rock in the Atlantic Ocean was to be both his prison and his grave; and his conqueror now came home to his countrymen, his great task finished, and with the glory of many campaigns and many victories, and not one defeat.

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Wellington, in a word, restored British self-respect in that one field where it had suffered many wounds. On the sea, Great Britain never lacked admirals who understood the art of victory, as witness Howe on June 1, Jervis at Cape St. Vincent, Duncan at Camperdown. Then came Nelson and his procession of great sea-battles, from the Nile to Trafalgar, and his equally great and heroic blockades; and, as a result, the British flag was supreme in every sea-a circumstance which, in a supreme degree, served the interests and flattered the pride of an island race. But in landwarfare, somehow, British soldiership seemed to have lost the art of victory. The men in the ranks had the fighting gifts of their race; but since Clive won Plassey, and Wolfe fell on the Plains of Abraham, British armies had produced no commander who knew how to win victories. And the secret of defeat everywhere lay not in the ranks but in the leadership. The very regiments which under Whitelock surrendered at Buenos Ayres, under Wellington met and defeated the best soldiers of France. In the early years of the great war were many expeditions, planless, resultless, directed at the wrong point, carried out in the wrong way, with plenty of fighting courage in the rank and file, but neither common sense nor military skill in the leading.

Now, Wellington had done something more than restore British self-respect as a fighting power. This 'nation of shopkeepers' discovered that, somehow, it had produced one of the great soldiers of history, the one battle-leader in the long cycle of wars which followed the French Revolution, who could cross swords with Napoleon. Wellington had learned the alphabet of his art in the bitter winters and under the drowsy generals of 1794–95. In that bad school he had learned, as he himself puts it, 'what not to do.' Then came India, where, as Wellington himself said, 'we fought as Alexander did,' and with—as far as Wellington, at least, was concerned—a touch of Alexander's genius: for Alexander himself would have understood Assaye, and might have envied it. If not

as great in scale as Arbela, it was a greater victory than that on the Granicus. India, however, was a distant field, and Indian victories made but a faint impression on the popular imagination in Great Britain. But the Peninsula gave to Wellington a field, near, spacious, memorable, with battles which Europe watched and which affected the fate of Europe. In his six stormy years in the Peninsula, Wellington met each of Napoleon's marshals in turn, out-marched, out-fought, and beat them, and drove the French armies from the Douro to the Nivelle-and across it. During those six years, with their resounding sieges and many battles, Wellington's figure grew more and more commanding as the tale of his victories stretched out without break. Then came 'the loud Sunday ' of Waterloo, a battle which, as Wellington himself said, did more for the peace of the world than any other battle in history, and which dismissed the fierce genius, by whose ambition Europe had been hag-ridden so long, to a splinter of rock in far-off seas.

The three years that followed Waterloo gave Wellington new tasks and a quite unique position. The work to be accomplished might well have taxed the energy of a committee made up of the wisest statesmen and most capable administrators in history. Twenty years of war had swept over Europe, and wrecked half of its thrones and more than half of its political systems. It had to be reconstructed, its wounds healed, its enmities soothed, its broken ties re-knitted; and, with at least rough equity, the innumerable wrongs bred of the war had to be redressed. For three years, France—the France of the Revolution and of Napoleon—was occupied by a piebald army—British, German, Austrian, Russian of which Wellington was the Commander-in-Chief; and the task of holding such a nation, under such conditions, and with such a force, was visibly rich in tragical possibilities. But Wellington discharged it with unsleeping vigilance, with faultless skill, and with a complete success. Under the Convention of Paris a commission had been appointed, consisting of representatives of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, charged to settle the claims of every country France had invaded. Every town and village laid waste during the Napoleonic wars sent in its 'bill,' drawn up in very spacious arithmetic; against these had to be weighed counter-claims on behalf of France. The injuries and ravages of twenty years of war, in other words, had to be assessed, translated into arithmetical terms, and distributed on principles of equity

over all Europe. The task was vast; it threatened to be interminable. When only half the countries affected had sent in their claims, the total exceeded £50,000,000. The Allied monarchs begged Wellington to take charge of the commission, and settle all the questions beneath which it threatened to be submerged. In two years Wellington assessed all these claims, reduced them to sane dimensions, and arranged a scheme of finance by which they were satisfied.

In effect, Europe had to be reconstructed, and what problems—political, dynastic, financial—were involved in such a task! But Wellington's tact, his coolness of temper, his singleness of purpose, his keen and penetrating intellect, his iron will, achieved the task; and the chief secret of his power was the universal confidence he commanded. Here was a great soldier with clean hands, and an absolutely single purpose. This explains why, in those three years after Waterloo, years which ensured a long-enduring peace to Europe, Wellington was able to play a part at once so honourable and so commanding. Maxwell, in his 'Life of Wellington,' says:

'The pages of history may be searched in vain for a parallel to the position of Wellington. Great conquerors, like Alexander or Napoleon, have wielded more extensive powers, but the voluntary assignment of undisputed ascendency by crowned heads and diplomatists to the subject of an alien monarch is unique in the history of civilisation. At the age of eight-and-forty Wellington was the most conspicuous figure—the most exalted individual—in the world.'

The choice of adjectives in that quotation is, perhaps, not too felicitous. Wellington was not quite the 'most exalted individual' in the world of that day; but he was for the moment the greatest personal force in it; the one indispensable man, if only from the circumstance that he was the one great figure known to seek no personal advantage, and about whom suspicion or mistrust was impossible. He did not aspire to a crown, but every crowned head in Europe trusted him when they could not trust each other. He was their one counsellor. He acted as a sort of embodied conscience to Europe.

It is easy to understand how Wellington, when he landed in England after six years of victorious warfare in the Peninsula and three years of supreme administrative success in France, was

to his own countrymen an object of deep and universal interest. It was recognised that here was a great soldier without perilous ambitions, and who was content to be a citizen amongst his fellowcitizens. 'I have eaten the King's salt,' was his own phrase, and his sole business in life was to serve the interests of the King and of his kingdom. And it was not the least of his titles to the admiration of his own countrymen that he was found to have all the familiar characteristics and limitations of his type. He had won many victories in strange lands, and over the armies of every nation under heaven; and yet he remained one of the most typically British figures in British history. His countrymen could understand him. He had no wizard-like strain of dazzling and uncomprehended genius, such as that which in Napoleon bewildered mankind. No one doubted his greatness, no one begrudged it, no one dreaded it. He had saved Europe, he was the trusted adviser of every crowned head in Europe, and yet he walked amongst his countrymen as one of themselves.

To Lady Salisbury, Wellington once explained his feelings after Waterloo, and how he mentally compared himself with other men. As a conversation revealing not merely the feelings of a great soldier in the moment of victory, but as a revelation of the self-judgment of one of the great figures in history, the conversation is of profound interest. Lady Salisbury had asked Wellington whether he felt sure of victory at Waterloo when he saw the defeat of the Old Guard. She added, 'What was your feeling at the moment? Did it not surpass all that one can imagine?' Then

followed this conversation:

'The Duke. It is very singular, but I have no recollection of any feeling of satisfaction. At the time I was by no means secure of the victory, nor till long afterwards. I can recollect no sensation of delight on that day—if I experienced it. My thoughts were so entirely occupied with what was to be done to improve the victory, to replace the officers that were lost, to put everything in proper order, that I had not leisure for another idea. I remember our supper that night very well, and then I went to bed, and was called about three in the morning by Hume to go and see poor Gordon, but he was dead before I got there. Then I came back and had a cup of tea and some toast, wrote my despatch, and then rode into Brussels.

'Lady S. But now, while you were riding there, did it never occur to you that you had placed yourself on a pinnacle of glory?

'The Duke. No. I was entirely occupied with what was

necessary to be done. At the door of my own hotel I met Creevey; they had no certain accounts at Brussels, and he called out to me, "What news?" I said, "Why, I think we've done for 'em this . . . . I staid all that day in Brussels, making different arrangements; among other things there was a mutiny among 3,000 prisoners we had in the gaol, with only 600 troops to guard them. I sent orders to the commanding officer that if they attempted to break a single bar he was to fire in among them, and I sent them word that I had done so. We heard no more of them after that. Then the Mayor came in great alarm. His people had seen some troops they mistook for French, and fancied they were coming upon them. I told them there was no fear; that Napoleon's army was scattered to the devil, and half-way to Paris by that time. I left Brussels next morning at four o'clock; the second night I slept at Malplaquet; the third I took Péronne; the fifth day I joined the Prussians before Paris. But it was not till ten or twelve days after the battle that I began to reflect on what I had done, and to feel it.

'Lady S. But the feeling of satisfaction must have come at last. I can't conceive how it did not take possession of your mind immediately—that you did not think how infinitely you had raised your name above every other.

'The Duke. That is a feeling of vanity; one's first thought

is for the public service.

'Lady S. But there must be a lasting satisfaction in that feeling of superiority you always enjoy. It is not in human nature that it should be otherwise.

'The Duke. True. Still I come constantly into contact with other persons on equal or inferior terms. Perhaps there is no man now existing who would like to meet me on a field of battle; in that line I am superior. But when the war is over and the troops disbanded, what is your great general more than anybody else? . . . . I am necessarily inferior to every man in his own line, though I may excel him in others. I cannot saw and plane like a carpenter, or make shoes like a shoemaker, or understand cultivation like a farmer. Each of these, on his own ground, meets me on terms of superiority. I feel I am but a man.' 1

That, it must be repeated, as the self-analysis of a man of supreme intellectual power, at the highest moment, and in the greatest achievement of his career, is a very striking bit of literature.

To hear Wellington talk about his battles must have been a supremely interesting experience; and it turned out that, granted fit audience and environment, there was nothing Wellington enjoyed more than exactly such discourse. 'It is impossible,' says Greville, to convey an idea of the zest, eagerness, frankness, and abundance with which he talked and told of his campaigns.' 'To those who lived on terms of any intimacy with the Duke,' says Gleig, 'there was nothing so agreeable as to get him, when in a communicative mood, on the subject of his campaigns. He expressed himself with such clearness and entire simplicity that a child could understand, while a philosopher admired, and became instructed by him.' 'You were never baulked,' Gleig adds, 'if you sought for information on any subject, so long as his keen sense of honour permitted him to speak. The tactics of his battles were often fully discussed. He was always most charming when he descended to little anecdotes which no one ever told better, or seemed more highly to relish than himself.'1

Wellington had some curious limitations. He hated newspapers with downright and quite delightful vigour. He suspected literary men in general, and historians in particular. He held that no true account of any battle could be written. Ellesmere gives an amusing example of Wellington's suspicion of all military literature. 'The Duke,' he says, ' had made it a rule never to read any work whatever bearing on his military career. He said they would merely tempt and provoke him to comments which he could not make without offence to living men. Before I knew this, I once asked him for his opinion on a passage in Napier, with whose work I took for granted he was familiar. He positively refused to read even an extract.' 2

Wellington's own Waterloo despatch is the poorest description of a great battle, written by the soldier that won it, to be found in literature. A tired mind is discoverable in every sentence. It is a bundle of merely conventional phrases. That on the morrow of such a fight Wellington could write the story in sentences so chilly and clumsy is nothing less than wonderful. Yet he would never mend it, nor admit that it could be mended. He believed nobody could write the story of Waterloo, or of any other battle:

'Surely the details of the battle,' he complained to Ellesmere, ' might have been left as in the original official reports. The battle, possibly the most important single military event of modern times, was attended by advantages sufficient for the glory of many such armies as the two great allied armies engaged. The enemy never rallied. Buonaparte lost his empire for ever. Not a shot was fired

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gleig, p. 140.

afterwards, and the peace of Europe and the world was settled on the basis on which it rests at this moment.'1

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If Wellington did not belong to the inarticulate class, yet he had something of the proud shyness, the lack of any fluency of self-expression, of his type. He wrote no commentaries like Cæsar. The self-vindicating and lying 'memorials' which make up the St. Helena literature were to him impossible. But frank talk about his battles was to him—always granted a fit audience—a delight; and naturally he never lacked listeners. They surrounded him, pursued him, hung on his lips; wrote down all his remembered words, and when memory failed sometimes the imagination supplied its place.

Grave history, of course, can hardly emerge from after-dinner chat. Gossip of this sort has its limitations, and Wellington himself has described them with amusing vigour. Thus he writes to Stanhope, the most enterprising and tireless of all his listeners:

'We converse loosely. We may say nothing that we do not think or know to be true. But if I was to think that every word I ever say or write was to be brought before the public I should hesitate before I dared to write or talk at all; and I should take care so to explain myself as that I could not be misunderstood.'

He told Stanhope, again, 'You are quite right to avoid to publish what you may learn in your private correspondence or private conversation with anybody.' But if Stanhope had any virtuous resolution of that sort as regards Wellington he overcame it, for his 'Remembrances of Conversations with Wellington' form a well-known volume. To another correspondent Wellington wrote:

'Nothing can be more unfair towards individuals than to write regular reports of their light conversation, and then for the friends of the writers to publish them years after their death. . . . As a consequence, men with information, and capable of affording it, will be silent in society.'—Despatches, xiii. 399.

But Wellington talked, eager listeners caught and recorded his words, and inevitably they found their way into print. So there has come into existence a world of intimate and personal literature about Wellington, made up of recollections of what he said, of gossip about him and with him. Probably all the literature of this type which is in existence, and consists of the 'journals' and 'recollections' of Wellington's contemporaries, has by this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ellesmere, p. 234.

time been published; and, as a result, we have the means of a more minute and intimate knowledge of Wellington than, perhaps, of any other great soldier in history. With the help of this literature we can hear him, in frank, unbuttoned talk, recalling the memories of his great fights; giving personal details about them, correcting the blunders of written history, telling why he did, or did not, make a certain movement, etc. It was after-dinner talk usually—easy, accidental, turned as if by chance now in one direction, now in another; and while it may be possible to overstate its value, it is impossible to deny its interest.

We have, it is true, his answers to the questions put to him, without the questions themselves; and this is like being in a room listening to someone who is talking through a telephone. We hear only one end of the conversation. After-dinner gossip, of course, sheds only pin-points of light—tiny but vivid gleams—on the topic discussed; but sometimes they strike, with sudden and illuminating effect, on points which have puzzled the experts; and there are many examples of this in Wellington's after-dinner talk. The value of such gossip, it may be added, lies not so much in the light shed on any particular incident as in the reflected light on

Wellington's own genius and methods.

Wellington was, on the whole, somewhat unfortunate in his listeners. A Boswell in epaulettes, one who knew war with intimate and personal knowledge, and then could reproduce Wellington's talks about his battles, might have added to English literature a volume of undying value; but amongst his old comrades there was no one with Boswell's genius for reproducing the mind and accents of another. As a matter of fact, after his active career as a soldier ended. Wellington drifted out of his old war-companionships. There are no talks recorded with Hill, the most trusted of his generals; with Murray, so long his chief of staff; with Cole, who brought up the Fusiliers at Albuera; with Colborne, who struck in on the flank of the Old Guard at Waterloo; or, if there were such talks, they remain unrecorded. Perhaps these battle-comrades were of the inarticulate order. 'The circle in which Wellington chiefly moved,' says Gleig, 'was that of fashionable ladies and gentlemen who pressed themselves upon him, and were flattered, as indeed they had much reason to be, with the notice he took of them, and by his presence at their parties.' Lady Shelley says that Wellington took great delight in the society of young men. He would watch his aides-de-camp dancing, and say, 'How would society get on

without all my boys?' 'The delight,' she says, 'that I felt in sitting next to the hero of Waterloo, listening to his cheerful conversation, is not easily expressed in words. He seemed to be the

youngest and the gayest of the party.'

Ellesmere gives an amusing example of the sort of talk with young men in which Wellington delighted. 'Alexander Ronald Grant, a nephew of Lord Glenelg, says that on one occasion his uncle was dining with the Duke, in company with several young officers, whom, after dinner, the Duke invited to ask him any questions they pleased as to his old campaigns. When they had finished, he said, "Now, you have asked me a great many questions; let me ask you one. What crisis in my military or political life cost me, do you think, the most anxious consideration?" One said "Assaye," another "Salamanca," another "Waterloo," etc., etc. "No, gentlemen, it was when, at a Cabinet Council, I had to consider the question of the safety of the King [William IV.] in going to the dinner in the City, and I felt compelled to say 'No."

Wellington talked most frankly with men of his own social rank, such as Stanhope, afterwards Lord Mahon; or with politicians of his own school, such as Croker. Of Stanhope, Lady Shelley gives an amusing description. She describes him as 'an extraordinary

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'If you happen to be in a frivolous mood, he will say foolish things, and will inspire folly in others. If you are in a serious vein, his conversation becomes interesting, and in the highest degree instructive. If you feel sentimental, his wonderful memory will supply poetical images from the finest passages in poetry. In coming home from Montmorenci a few days ago, I asked him to tell me a story. He rolled them out, one after the other, always using the most appropriate expression, and with a precision in detail which made each story appear credible. Without being handsome, Colonel Stanhope is not bad-looking—but he is never two days alike. He is a charming companion; obliging, good-tempered, full of wit; and yet it would be quite impossible to fall in love with him. This makes his companionship especially delightful.'—Lady Shelley, i. p. 143.

Stanhope had wit enough to know the value of Wellington's words, and to catch them he pursued the great soldier with a courage that sometimes lacked discretion. The Duke, says Maxwell, 'after dinner, used to sit reading the paper with a lamp on the table

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ellesmere, p. 64.

beside him. Lord Mahon generally contrived to get round this table, and engage him in conversation.'

'On one occasion the ladies of Strathfieldsaye, thinking the Duke might be wearied with this pardonable importunity, arranged, as they thought without his perceiving it, a sofa and other furniture so as to bar Lord Mahon's usual access; but his lordship was not to be baffled; he managed to scale or thread the defences, and presently was deep in interrogation. That night, when, as usual, the Duke was handing the ladies their bedroom candlesticks, he remarked to one of them, with a twinkle in his eye: "Your fortifications were not very effective, after all." He had seen through the little scheme, and was much amused at the amiable enemy's determination.' 1

Stanhope had ability and strong literary tastes. He was one of Peel's literary executors, held office as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and his 'History of England from the Peace of Utrecht' is one of those books 'to be found in every gentleman's library.' His 'recollections' of Wellington's talk cover a very wide variety of topics, but they are of a very fragmentary order, and do not echo any of the deeper notes of Wellington's mind.

Croker was, perhaps of all Wellington's interlocutors, the one to whom he talked with greatest frankness, and who could discourse with him on some terms of intellectual equality. For Croker was a man of great intellectual powers. Most readers know Croker through Macaulay's savage review of his edition of 'Boswell,' a review which, for injustice, deserves to be classed with Croker's own notorious review of Keats' 'Endymion.' Macaulay describes Croker as 'a very bad man'; 'his writings,' he says, 'contain nothing but italics and capitals as substitutes for eloquence and reason.' He was, says Macaulay, 'the most inaccurate writer that ever lived, and his morals were as bad as his style.' 'A bad, a very bad man,' is his summary of Croker's character. But all that only proves that Macaulay was in a very bad temper with Croker. Croker is the original of Rigby, in Disraeli's 'Coningsby,' and that fact, perhaps, counts for more against Croker than Macaulay's furious rhetoric.

But Croker had the most sustained, if not the most intimate, friendship with Wellington of any man of his day; and that circumstance is sufficient to prove that he had fine qualities. For Wellington's moral judgment was keen and unerring. He certainly would not have given to Croker such a place in his esteem if he had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Maxwell, xi., 374.

been in intellect and character what Macaulay tried to make him out to be. Croker was for more than twenty-two years one of the most formidable debaters in a Parliament rich in great debaters, and he was one of the best Secretaries of the Admiralty since the days of Pepys. Wellington had brought Croker into public life, and lived on term of loyal friendship with him to

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The closest male friendship of Wellington's life was undoubtedly with Arbuthnot, and yet it would be difficult to imagine two characters who, in outward aspect and in temperament, seemed less in agreement with one another. Arbuthnot was curiously silent and unassertive; yet he must have had at least some hidden elements of strength in his nature. He was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs for a few months, was sent as Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople at a very critical moment, and, according to gossip, was not only Minister, but Admiral—for a British squadron was lying off Constantinople at the moment. But he was a mild, gentle, silent figure, a miracle of discretion, no doubt, and he was drawn into curiously intimate relations with Wellington. Perhaps it was a relief for the man whose brain held so many secrets to have as his closest confidant one who had a genius for silence. In his later years Arbuthnot had rooms in Apsley House, as well as at Strathfieldsaye, and the two men were in very close companionship. Arbuthnot was the same age as Wellington, but had no touch of his iron frame, and as he grew infirm the Duke would care for him with almost womanly vigilance and tenderness. His death kindled in Wellington a grief which perhaps no other human death awakened. The funeral was on a bitter winter day, the air full of snowflakes, wind-driven; but Wellington stood by his friend's grave, wrapped in his mourning cloak, with the tears streaming How much Arbuthnot could have told of down his cheeks. Wellington's thoughts and recollections! But he has told nothing.

Creevey was perhaps the last man on the public stage of his day with whom Wellington might be expected to be on terms of intimacy. He belonged to the opposite political camp, and to quite another social class; his papers are rich in abuse of Wellington. Greville, in his Journal, talks of 'old Creevey' in amusing terms. he says, 'few connections, a great many acquaintances, a good constitution, and extraordinary spirits. He possesses nothing but his clothes; he lives a vagrant life. He has no servant, no home, no creditors . . . I think he is the only man I know in society who possesses nothing.' And yet Creevey played an active part in

the politics of his time. He was Secretary of the Board of Control. in the 'Ministry of all the Talents,' after Pitt's death. Melbourne described him as 'very shrewd, but exceedingly bitter and malignant.' The Creevev Papers are curiously interesting, but the number of 'damns' in them might have qualified Creevey for high rank in the army that served, and swore, in Flanders. Creevey, however, was the luckiest of all those who talked with Wellington and have preserved his talk. He was in Brussels when Waterloo was fought. All day long he was listening to the thunder of the guns coming from the south. He saw the wounded and the flying streaming through the streets of Brussels. Thackeray's famous picture of the scene in Brussels on that day is not to be compared, for detail and vividness, with that which Creevey gives. The next morning Wellington had ridden into the city, and looking from the window of the room in which he stood he saw Creevey and beckoned him up; and in all the literature of Waterloo there is no page more interesting than that in which Wellington tells Creevey how 'close run' was the great fight.

Stanhope was, no doubt, the most ingenious and enterprising of all Wellington's listeners, Croker perhaps the ablest, Creevey the luckiest. But Lord Ellesmere is, in some respects, perhaps the most important, as Wellington directly inspired his famous article in the 'Quarterly Review' of 1842 on the 'Life of Blücher.' 'It included a Memorandum on Waterloo, which,' says Ellesmere, 'the Duke supplied me with, parts of which I incorporated into the article in question. He stayed with me for some time, and read to me various parts. I took down the pages by his desire. You never saw a man so delighted as the Duke is, and saying that he would go and write his Memorandum, and make out Alison to be

a d-d rascally Frenchman.'1

It is curious to notice that some of the best and most illuminating conversations with Wellington were by women. Given a woman of tact and sense, with a quick brain, a clever tongue, and an admiring attitude—a woman who gave much and exacted little—and Wellington talked at his best. If, for example, the 'Recollections' of Lady Shelley and of Lady Salisbury disappeared from English literature, we should miss some very interesting aspects of Wellington's character. His talks with women, indeed, deserve a chapter all to themselves.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ellesmere, p. 236.

To be concluded.)

## WHEN JOHNNIE CAME MARCHING HOME.

## BY JANE H. FINDLATER.

LOOKING very cheerful, Mr. Beattie, the minister of Craske, came down from his study where he had been interviewing a young parishioner.

'There's good in everything, after all, Elizabeth,' he said to his wife. 'Even this terrible war is doing something for the parish:

Johnnie Gilfillan is off to enlist to-morrow.'

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> 'Not really? Why, it will be the making of the lad-there's hope for him at last!' cried Mrs. Beattie with a ring of genuine pleasure in her voice. She was a thin, over-wrought looking woman who threw herself with desperate energy into everything she did and said. Years ago, in her enthusiastic youth, she had declared that no position could be more delightful than that of a minister's wife, and she came to the parish of Craske with rosecoloured schemes of all that she was going to do there. Time had dimmed the brightness of these schemes considerably; but it says a great deal for the altruistic fire which burned in the soul of Mrs. Beattie, that after ten years in a remote Highland parish she still hoped at all. Her husband was of a less optimistic nature: he had been gradually and fatefully driven to the conclusion that but little can be done to change human nature: 'It's not bad-but it's not all good,' he would sigh; 'and it's ill to alter-ill to alter, Elizabeth.' She would have none of this depressing doctrine, and sometimes took her husband to task for his views. During these ten laborious years she had been flinging herself at the rocky character of their parishioners, always expecting to find that she could effect some change in their natures.

'I don't know why you're a minister,' she told her husband, 'if you think so little can be done to change people—what are we

here for if not for that?'

'We're here to try,' he answered—keeping to his own opinion none the less. But this evening, Mr. Beattie was in a more hopeful mood: 'There really is hope for Johnnie now,' he repeated, satisfaction in his voice. 'To be taken away from that home, subjected to discipline, and made to work hard—that's what he needs—we won't know him after a year or two.'

The Gilfillan home was indeed of the kind that is the reformer's despair. Gilfillan, the father, had gone through life without ever doing an honest day's work, and died at forty, leaving a family of eight sickly children to be provided for out of the croft. One after another, five of these olive-branches had been translated to a brighter world, each (as Mrs. Beattie stringently put it) dying of dirt. Mrs. Gilfillan wept over each death-bed—tears that were the only washing her face ever seemed to have; but she never exerted herself to see what could be done to improve the health of the remaining children.

It was the Lord's will, she argued, 'We'll no' can question His wull.'... In vain Mrs. Beattie pointed out to her that if, as she said, Willie had 'taken the trouble off Alexander,' and 'Alexander had taken it off Bella,' then something should be done to safeguard the survivors—James, Duncan, and Johnnie. Mrs. Gilfillan would not listen to these counsels: she rather enjoyed deaths, they gave her an excuse to cease any pretext of work, and were also an occasion for the neighbours to come in and talk endlessly over the sad event.

She would stand complacently in the doorway, face unwashed, hair uncombed, arms akimbo, the buttons of her bodice half off, the hooks of her skirt unfastened, while she went over in detail the last moments of one or other of the ill-fated children. Always her recitation ended with the same words, 'Aye, it was tae be, ye see'; nor would anything have convinced her of the fallacy of this reasoning. At last, however, Death seemed to weary of his annual visits to the cottage—he passed by, searching perhaps for worthier victims; James, Duncan, and Johnnie, it appeared, were to adorn our lower sphere for a time.

Like their father, these boys grew tall and lank. Their work, first at school and later on the croft, was languid and ineffectual. Weeds grew rife in the fields; the byre was dirty; bits of thatch blew off the roof in every gale and were seldom replaced, so that long trickles of damp greened the filthy walls of the kitchen.

Instead of asking how things could best be done, the first question in the Gilfillan cottage was always how they could be accomplished with the least trouble—taking pains over anything was unknown with this family. So life had gone on, year after year, like a stagnant pool, getting more and more stagnant as time went on, till suddenly, like a great wave of fresh water sweeping into it, came the rumours of War.

At first half-believed in only—as was perhaps natural in such a lonely neighbourhood—the news slowly began to permeate the consciousness of the country-side. Great events were going on beyond the blue hills that shut off Craske from the outer world—almost it seemed as if its ancient rest might be troubled. . : .

In August the war began; but the hay at Craske had to be cut that month, so Johnnie thought little about fighting then. By September the tardy crop of corn was waiting to be taken in; again there was enough at home to engage his attention. But when the October days began to shorten, and the evenings lengthened, Johnnie would sit beside the kitchen fire reading a dirty newspaper by the light of a vile-smelling paraffin lamp. A pane had been broken in the window all summer, and now that the weather was becoming colder every one in the cottage suffered from the draught that blew in through the hole-still no one took the trouble to mend it. Mrs. Gilfillan would prop up an old book against it, or stuff a rag through the hole; but the draught blew in all the same, and made the ill-trimmed wick flare up every now and then. The lamp chimney had always one side thick with soot in consequence, and by this dim light, Johnnie read the glorious exploits of his fellow-men on the blood-drenched fields of France.

It is difficult for those who have lived an ordinary town life to understand the outlook of a lad like Johnnie. He had never, for instance, seen a regiment or heard the tap of a drum; so all descriptions of warfare were necessarily misty and unreal to him. Imagination, however, had not been left out of his composition, and fed on a generous diet of journalese, his fancy built up wonderful pictures of the conflict that was shaking the world.

As he dawdled about the croft, the dullness of existence was brightened by these new images—he had something fresh to think about at last. Work on the Gilfillan croft always remained undone as long as possible; the potatoes were left in the ground after the neighbours had lifted theirs, and Johnnie began to think of pitting them when the other people in the place had finished the job. But this autumn his wits (as the old saying goes) were so wool-gathering over the war that even Mrs. Gilfillan became a little anxious as to the ultimate fate of the crop. Kingdoms might rise or fall; but why should the family potatoes be lost?

This was her thought as she stood by the cottage door one wet November afternoon, eveing the blackened shaws in the

unharvested field. And at that very moment, Johnnie came slouching down through the field, dripping with rain, his boots clodded with earth, the starved, yellow collie slinking at his heels. They were not a prepossessing couple.

'Hey, Johnnie!' his mother yelled at him—for it is a characteristic of very lazy people that they generally elect to address others from a distance. 'Johnnie! ve maun commence howking the

taties the morn!'

Johnnie drew near, halted by the door, and made startling answer:

'I canna-I'm awa tae the War the morn!'

'Hoots! laddie—sic clavers—you an' the War, are ye daft athegither?' his mother replied. The fact was that Johnnie had been bitten with thoughts of enlisting for some time, and now his wavering resolution suddenly crystallised, as the resolutions of weak men often will, merely from a sense of contradiction. Told that the potatoes must be lifted, he declared at a moment's notice his intention of going to the War, and having once made the startling announcement he had to stick to it. At first incredulous, Mrs. Gilfillan then became anxious; finally, quite everwhelmed, she flung her filthy apron over her face, and sat down to indulge in one of those cleansing bursts of weeping that occasionally took the place, with her, of more particular ablutions.

No Spartan mother this: her one aim was to dissuade her son from his suicidal plan. 'What for would ye gang, Johnnie?' she sobbed. 'It's for the gentry tae do the fightin'—them that has a'the land—bide you at home, laddie—ye've no verra muckle tae lose, an' gin thae Germans are tae come you'll no' stop them

-jist bide wi' yer mither, Johnnie.' . . .

So little did she know of the human heart, that it never struck her how often it was worked by nothing but contradiction. Her son's resolution, indeed, hardened with every futile argument she adduced, till he felt himself a very lion of daring.

'Ye think I'll no' can stop a German, mither?' he cried. 'I'd like tae see the man would get past me! It'll no' take me long

tae learn the shootin'.'

'It's an ill day ever I got a paper intil the hoose,' the poor woman lamented. 'They jist fill yer heid wi' clash and lees; ye'd never have heard tell o' yon war if it hadna' been for that papers!'

Rather pleased by the sensation he was creating, Johnnie began

to wonder why he had been so long about it. This pleasurable excitement might have come to pass weeks ago. He had never felt himself of so much importance before, and he experienced a thrill of delight as he thought how his friends in the village would receive the news. If his mother was in such a state, surely they could not fail to be equally impressed. It was no light matter

to have come to this heroic decision, he thought. . . .

Recruiting had never been good at Craske. The only lad from the parish that Johnnie could remember as having joined the colours was a certain Dan MacQueen—a youth of doubtful parentage who had (it was supposed) taken to soldiering in default of any better means of making a livelihood. Johnnie had always spoken of Dan with contempt; for the trade of war is not, for some mysterious reason, well looked upon in certain districts of Scotland. The thought that he was 'evening himself' with MacQueen by entering the same profession gave Johnnie a distinct pang. Would other people now speak of him as he used to speak of Dan? he wondered. He even remembered (and it was a bitter memory) how Robina Stuart, the belle of Craske, had mentioned the subject: 'So Dan's off to the sojering?' she had said with her little chuckling laugh. 'The lad's daft, surely—ech! it would be an awfae thing to marry on a sojer!'

The remembrance of this speech almost shook Johnnie's resolution. Robina had been the object of his most ardent admiration for quite a year. During these twelve months he had gone to church persistently for no other reason than that he might gaze at her. Johnnie's attendance at ordinances had been so markedly regular that Mrs. Beattie, ever hopeful, spoke to her husband about this sign of grace in their young parishioner. With a melancholy knowledge of human nature Mr. Beattie had assured her that there were more reasons than one for church attendance. . . .

But this is a digression: Johnnie decided that Robina's attitude on these matters must have been changed by the present crisis; she would look upon his enlistment quite differently from Dan's. MacQueen had gone into the army for a living; he, Johnnie, was joining the colours from true patriotism—to shed his blood for his country—a very different matter this, as Robina must surely see.

She probably had not meant what she said either—that was another thing. Johnnie would not have confessed it to anyone, but Robina was an enigma to him; he never really knew whether she spoke in joke or in earnest. She said a thing so gravely, and

then a smile would dance into the corner of her bright blue eyes. . . . It was baffling, . . . a man didn't know how to reply to her sallies; yet part of Robina's charm lay in this same baffling quality.

So Johnnie comforted his heart with these considerations, and tried to believe that she hadn't been in earnest when she laughed

at soldiering.

Filled with solemn self-importance, Johnnie decided that he must go to the manse and tell the minister of his decision—and here we arrive again at the evening when Mr. Beattie had told his wife that there was good in everything since Johnnie Gilfillan was going to enlist.

The interview between the minister and his parishioner had been most cheerful. Mr. Beattie was kind and encouraging; he even smoothed the thorny path of enlistment by telling Johnnie exactly what he had to do.

'You've only to go to the post-office, and you will find there which is the nearest recruiting-office—Kilmuirton, probably; then your fare is paid for you, so there is no difficulty in that direction,' he said.

'Mither's awfu' pit aboot; she's no wantin' me tae gang,' said Johnnie.

The minister considered for a moment. 'There are times in life when it is right to oppose even a mother's wishes, Gilfillan,' he said; 'and I feel that you are doing the larger duty when you take this step—I only wish more of the lads in this parish saw their way to enlisting. Perhaps some of them will follow your example—things often only want a beginning.'

This commendation added a little extra fuel to the fire of

self-esteem which had begun to burn in Johnnie's heart.

'A man maun dae his best for his country,' he said modestly.
'An' when ye read of these "chairges," as they ca' them, it's grand! My word, but I'd like tae be in a chairge!—the Coldstream Gairds did verra weel—I'm thinkin' o' going intil the Coldstreams mysel'.'

'A fine regiment: you couldn't do better,' said Mr. Beattie, though mentally he pitied that sergeant of the Coldstreams who should have the task of bringing up Johnnie's drooping shoulders into approved regimental smartness. Aloud he added: 'You'll be another man in a year's time, Gilfillan, if all goes well.'

Finding the minister so sympathetic, Johnnie became more expansive: 'I'd like fine tae see a regiment,' he said. 'They're savin' it's a fine sight, wi' the flags and drums and pipes and a'.'

Mr. Beattie smiled. 'It is,' he said rather sadly. 'It is—but all that is only the showy side of war; we have to dig much deeper to find the spirit which animates an army and sends men to death.' But even as he spoke, the minister knew that his listener did not comprehend a word that he was saying. The flag and the drum, or rather images of the flag and drum, were all that Johnnie followed as yet.

It may seem an easy matter for City people to get information at a post-office; in country neighbourhoods the process is often attended with no little difficulty.

This evening, as Johnnie made his way into the tiny post-office of Craske, he found the shop quite busy. Two crofters were there buying tobacco, accompanied by their dogs; a shepherd's wife with a basket had come to do her week's marketing; and Robina Stuart stood by the counter, waiting, as a pound of cheese was weighed out for her—Johnnie's heart beat high; this was a glorious opportunity. Before them all he would announce himself—the hero-to-be of the neighbourhood.

Kicking aside the collies with scant kindliness, he pushed his way up to the counter and addressed the meek little postmistress in as peremptory a tone as he could command: 'Hey! gie's the recruitin'-papers, mistress, I'm awa' tae the War!'

A German bomb could scarcely have produced a greater commotion. Everyone in the shop, male and female, exclaimed at the announcement; and Mrs. Macdonald the postmistress, called upon to provide information on recruiting for the first time, was quite at a loss how to do so.

The pound of cheese had to be left unweighed upon the scales, while she got out a pair of spectacles and fumbled over unusual and formidable papers, reading out with new interest headlines that had conveyed but little to her before this time:

"Your King and Country need You" (that'll no' be what yer seekin'?)... Ech! this'll be mair what yer after: "Height 5 foot 3 inches and upwards, chest at least 34 inches"—ye'll be far mair than thon, Johnnie?... "Married men are not accepted"—but I see yon's for the Royal Field Artillery, whatever it may be—but ye're no' married, my laddie!"...

So her agitated comments ran. At last Robina, whose talents were practical, detected among the mass of papers spread upon the

counter, the list of recruiting-offices.

'Here ye are, Johnnie! ye can 'list at Kilmuirton, an' ye're to take the cheapest machine ye can get—maybe, ye could walk, that would be fine and cheap!—and the country'll pay the machine,' she announced gleefully.

Johnnie was disappointed. He had been at Kilmuirton a dozen times—knew its dull little street, its few shops, church, and drinking-fountain off by heart. There was absolutely no interest or adventure about the place—he had thought of going much farther afield; this made enlisting a very every-day business.

'I was thinkin' on goin' tae Glasgie or Edinbury,' he confessed. But Robina, who had been about the world a bit, had a wonderful amount of information apparently on the subject of enlisting.

'Ye can go to Glasgie if ye like,' she told him, with quite an air of authority. 'But ye'll no' can take a machine from here to Glasgie at the expense of the country, mind. Nor the train neither—ye must go to the nearest place, ye understand.'

'Ye ken a lot aboot recruitin', Robina!' said Johnnie, struck

with a random pang of jealous suspicion.

'And what for no? Wasn't I two year in Stirling?' she answered—a reply which soothed him a little; perhaps she did not know so much about military matters after all. Thrift was not a virtue ever practised by a Gilfillan, therefore it took Johnnie only a minute to decide that he would pay his own fare to Glasgow or Edinburgh on this glorious occasion. He had longed to see these cities all his days; this was an excellent excuse for seeing them; besides, it sounded very grand to say before Robina as he now did:

'Hoots! I'll pay my ain tucket.'

Unhappily, Robina did not seem much impressed by this lordly speech. She said, 'That's easy done,' and added, 'But what's taking you to the War, Johnnie? It'll be an awfu' thing if a' the likely lads in the countryside are off to France!'

Flattered to hear himself called a likely lad, Johnnie glowed with pride. It was the Call of Duty, he told Robina (and the other listeners) that he was following; he wished more of the lads would hear it; he didn't know what they were thinking about. . . .

'Well,' said Robina sedately, as she received her parcels at last and turned to leave the shop. 'Well, ye see, they're not jist as brave as you are, maybe—it takes a brave man for the fighting.'

She bade them all good-night, and stepped out into the darkness, carrying her basket. Johnnie would have liked to follow her immediately and offer to carry the basket; but he forced himself to wait for five minutes that his passion might not be revealed to the onlookers; it would be easy to overtake Robina. He bought some tobacco; some black-lead for his mother (though it was a thing she never used), a bar of soap (almost as seldom in request), a loaf; and, finally, when he thought that all suspicion must be at an end, left the shop laden with parcels.

Along the road he went at a great pace, splashing through the puddles (for it was a wet night), peering into the darkness in search of Robina. Nearly half a mile from the village he came up with her at last—unhappily, quite near her own door. Breathless with the haste of his hot pursuit, Johnnie stopped beside the girl. She turned to see who was there.

'Oh, if I'd known ye were comin' this road, ye might have carried the basket—it's awfu' heavy,' she said gaily.

'I'll tak it noo,' said Johnnie, delighted.

'It's not worth yer while—we're near hand the gate,' she told him. This was true, for a glimmer of light from the cottage window was already shining into the darkness. Johnnie plunged headlong towards his fate, urged by the thought that in a few minutes Robina would have vanished inside her own door.

'Robina, I'm tae ask ye—I'm wantin' tae ask ye '—he began, then floundered and stopped short.

'Weel—ask me then,' said she; and, goaded to desperation, Johnnie got out the words at last.

'I'm tae ask-Will ye marry me when I come hame?'

'Eh!—and you a sojer! D'ye think I couldna have had a sojer afore this if I'd wanted him?—and me so long in Stirling!' cried Robina. This was indisputable, and Johnnie winced.

'Things is different the noo,' he urged. 'Sojering's no' the poor trade it was—ye maun look tae the honour an' glory,

Robina.'

'Hoots! honour and glory'll not feed ye. Half the lads that come hame'll never do a day's work again. A fine like thing it would be to marry on a man like yon!'

Johnnie was a little nonplussed by this view of things—he had

not thought of the possibilities of disablement.

'The country'll see tae them,' he said, speaking with vague but touching confidence. Robina gave a short laugh.

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'I'm thinkin' there's many a woman'll get her man tae keep for a wee while,' she said.

Johnnie was surprised. He had never suspected that Robina was of such a calculating nature; almost, for a moment, his idol rocked upon her throne. Then he returned to his allegiance and his entreaties.

'Will ye hae me if I'm no killed?' he asked, too much in earnest to see the absurdity of his question. Robina laughed again: they had reached the door of the cottage. Her hand was on the latch as she answered:

'If there's onything left of ye besides honour and glory ye may ask me again, Johnnie.'

The first glimpse of war that Johnnie was destined to have was stirring enough. He had decided to go to Edinburgh, and, once arrived there, he wandered up (with much the expression of a great, overgrown, lost child upon his face) into the High Street of the city. There he stood, under the age-stained walls, gaping at all he saw. The rags and dirt, alas! so characteristic of that historic street, could not surprise anyone brought up in the Gilfillan home; but the crowds and the high old buildings filled his country soul with astonishment. And as he stood thus, a stir went through the crowd; every head turned in one direction—something was coming—What could it be?

'It's maybe a funeral,' Johnnie thought, and with that passion for obsequies which is so universal in Scotland, he pressed through the bystanders that he might enjoy the spectacle more nearly.

Then down the winding street came what looked to his unaccustomed eyes like a river of men: it flowed past him. So perfect was the rhythm of their march that the individuals were merged into a whole and moved as one man. Johnnie held his breath in admiration for a moment, then cheered with the cheering multitude, and began to run alongside of the soldiers that he might feast his eyes still upon their matchless bravery. His heart thumped to the beat of the drum, he was in an ecstasy of fervent adoration. Here was war—the glory, the thrill, and rapture of it! Johnnie could not have expressed one half of this; but in the depths of his being he felt what he had no words to say. He ran alongside the regiment, cheering and shouting till his throat was hoarse; at last, fell off from the pursuit and lapsed again into the crowd, panting and excited.

'I suppose you call that a fine sight?' said someone beside him. He turned round and saw that the speaker was a man in light clothes wearing a red tie.

'Aye, it's grand!' Johnnie cried. 'D'ye ken what's the

regiment?'

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The man shrugged his shoulders. 'Black Watch or something—I don't take much interest in them—that's not what men are made for.' He was bending forward lighting his pipe, carefully sheltering the bowl from the wind with one hand. Now he looked up again at Johnnie and asked suddenly:

'Going to enlist-like other young fools?'

'Aye, I'm tae 'list the day,' said Johnnie, falling into the trap.
'Well, take my advice and think twice before you do so: waiting

does no harm.'

'There's a deal tae see in Edinbury, is there no'? I've heard tell o' Holyrood Palace an' the Castle, they'll no' be verra far frae here?'

'Not far at all: but if you think of enlisting, there's more that you should see than that—you should see what War really is.'

Johnnie was mystified. 'What's that yer sayin'?' he asked. They fell into step and turned to walk slowly up the street together.

'I don't know if you know your Bible—most Scotchmen do,' the man said then, 'and an uncommonly sharp book it is,' he added (a remark which made our innocent Johnnie start). 'Well, there's a saying in it something to this effect: "Who that sets out to build a tower doesn't first count the cost?"'

'Aye,' said Johnnie, 'I ken that verse fine.' The older man took his pipe from his mouth and spat coarsely upon the ground.

'The sayings of Jesus,' he said, 'are a curious mixture of acuteness and folly!' (and again Johnnie winced, astounded by the familiarity of the reference). 'Well, this one is all acuteness. My point is, have you counted the cost of War?' Johnnie did not understand the drift of this talk—he had never heard its like before, he stammered and hesitated.

'I was readin', aboot a million punds a day,' he said.

'Yes, yes—that's the money—I wasn't speaking of that. What about the cost in flesh and blood?'

'Aye?' Johnnie grunted; not much more comprehending vet.

'Well now, I'll show you what I mean if you come with me this afternoon. Go and amuse yourself now instead of taking the shilling, and meet me here at two o'clock-then I'll show you

a thing or two.'

Johnnie was out for experiences: he knew not a soul in Edinburgh town, so this overture of friendliness was not unwelcome. After all, he thought, what harm would it do to take an hour or so to consider and look about him? If there was—as this strange man told him—more to see of War, then just as well to find out what it was.

'I wouldn't could find ye, maybe,' he hesitated.

'You can't miss me if you came to the door of the recruiting-office in the High Street—anyone will direct you. I'll be there at two o'clock.'

'An' ye say there's mair tae see?' Johnnie persisted.

'Much more-I'll guarantee that if you come.'

'Aye-I'll come, then,' says Johnnie.

The clocks were striking two as Johnnie drew near the recruiting-office that afternoon. The usual War posters met his eye—he gazed at them, fascinated, wondering how long it would take for him to be transformed into such a man as they represented.

'Like to look like that?' the voice of his new friend said beside him. Johnnie startled and blushed, ashamed to have been caught

so obviously thinking of appearances.

'Ave: I'm no' verra sure which tae gang intil,' he said. 'You regiment in the kilts were awfu' fine-d'ye think I'd set the kilts ?' There might certainly have been two opinions on this point; but the stranger did not go into the question. He hurried Johnnie on up the street away from the scene of temptation. And as they walked, he discoursed to our young friend from the country in a fashion that was quite new to him. The working classes, according to this teacher, were pitilessly exploited for the benefit of the rich; no one had any right to own large estates; everyone who did so was an oppressor of the poor. One of the worst tyrannies of the upper classes was the military tyranny: officers were all tyrants and drove their men on to death that the ends of wealth might be protected. Thinking men should refuse to be thus made tools of; they should be tilling the ground instead of watering it with their blood. Only fools fought; or rich men who fought to retain their wealth, homes, and lands. But what had the poor man to fight for? Never a rood of earth to call his own till he

lay in his grave. . . . 'And out there in France, just now, they don't even give them this—shovel them into a shallow hole and done with it all.' . . .

'Gosh me!' cried Johnnie, aghast. 'I'd like tae be pit awa' snod and decent like!'

'Well, then, stay at home if you wish that.'

Johnnie was amazed by the cogency of these arguments: he thought even Mr. Beattie was not half so fluent as this man. And all the time they were walking on and on through a network of streets as bewildering to Johnnie's country eyes as these theories were to his country intellect.

'Ah! here we are!' the stranger said at last, as they came up to a large gateway. He took out a card, spoke with a porter, and they passed into a building that seemed to Johnnie to loom above

them like one of his native mountains.

'Maybe it's a barracks,' he thought. Then he smelt a strange, heavy smell that was quite unknown to him—it pervaded every crevice of the painfully clean staircases and the eerie, echoing, stone passages.

'Have you been in a hospital before?' his friend asked-

noticing, perhaps, the curious sniff that Johnnie gave.

'Na-will this be a hospital?' he asked.

'It is; come this way. You've seen what soldiers are like before they go into a fight; now you'll see them after it.' Opening a door, they passed into a great room, and the stranger, with a slight gesture of his hand, as it were introduced Johnnie to these men of whom he had just spoken.

There they were—like the victims of some race of Giant Inquisitors they lay there, creatures broken on the Wheel of War.

Johnnie stood sheepishly at the door, afraid to move forward across the polished floor and among those broken men. But the stranger pushed him forward between the rows of beds.

It was not at all dramatic: each man was just quietly carrying his own special burden of pain, whatever that might be, and most of them looked very cheerful. But these Johnnie was directed to pass by; his attention was directed rather to the men who were lying very still.

'There!' his friend would say, nudging his elbow. 'There!' and 'There!' And Johnnie gaped, marvelling, with a sudden coldness running all through him, at what he saw. . . .

A man lying on his face, his head buried in the pillow.

'What for does he lie like yon?' Johnnie whispered.

'He's lain like that for weeks—so comfortable isn't it? His back was wounded,' the stranger said. 'And just take a look round that screen in the corner, too.' Johnnie peeped as he was bidden, and saw a young boy who lay very deep down in the bed, very flat—he looked as if he had no body, only a head—his large eyes had a startled expression as if he were listening for the approach of a distant foe. 'Death and He isn't far off,' the stranger whispered.

They passed slowly up the ward. At one point Johnnie drew back startled. 'Eh! what for do they leave a corp here?' he said in horrified whisper. And then he saw that the corpse breathed: it was a man, young and powerfully built, who lay like one dead, only the rise and fall of the coverlet over his breast showed that breath still remained in him. Each eye was covered with a pad of cotton wool; his nostrils were swollen and discoloured.

'What's come till his eyes?' Johnnie questioned.

'Only that they're gone,' was the answer. . . .

'Eh! look to that men!' Johnnie exclaimed, his attention suddenly distracted by a new sight. The door of the ward had opened, and four attendants in white clothes came in, carrying a man on a stretcher. Now indeed was Johnnie convinced that he beheld a corpse, for the figure on the stretcher was rigid as marble, white and lifeless. They paused beside an empty bed, and lifted the great helpless body on to it. Two nurses bent over the man arranging his sheets and pillows, and at that moment, a groan the like of which Johnnie had never heard before, burst from the man's lips. It seemed to tear its way up through his body as he came back reluctantly out of unconsciousness into the agony of living once more. With each breath that came and went, this long, strangling groan was repeated: it had almost the regularity of a machine. Johnnie listened, trembling and afraid. Then his guide spoke again, two words only: 'Cannon's meat,' he said in a low voice. Johnnie had never heard the old never-to-be-surpassed phrase; it gripped him with all the force of its dread truthfulness.

'I'm awa, mister!' he exclaimed, turning right and round about and making for the door. He had had his impression.

But half-way down the ward his headlong flight was arrested. What did he see? Was it—could it be Dan MacQueen who lay there? The features of his old playmate were familiar to Johnnie, but the whole aspect of the man had changed. Gaunt, holloweyed, and worn with the impress of a hundred stern adventures,

Dan yet wore an air of exquisite serenity that Johnnie did not recognise. He lay propped high on pillows, his eyes closed—almost it seemed that he smiled to himself. Johnnie halted beside the bed, and Dan, hearing the step, opened his eyes.

'Eh! MacQueen! I didna ken ye'd been hurt?' Johnnie exclaimed, sincerely moved to see one whom he knew in these

trying circumstances.

'Aye, I've lost my airm,' said Dan, as if it were the most everyday matter. He manifested no surprise at the sight of Johnnie either—he had got beyond surprises.

'Eh! that's awfae-I'm real sorry, man,' said Johnnie.

'There's many lost mair,' was Dan's stolid reply; and then shoving aside his own loss he inquired: 'Hoo's a' the folk at Craske?'

But if losing an arm was a matter so easily dismissed by Dan, it appeared in quite another light to Johnnie—he had no thoughts to spare for the people of Craske at this moment.

'What'll ye dae wantin' it ?' he queried. 'Ye'll no' can wurk

noo.'

'They're tellin' me I'll, maybe, get a bit pension; but I'm no' thinkin' verra muckle aboot it,' said Dan. He closed his eyes again with that same curious air of serenity. Johnnie was puzzled. Why a man in such a case should look so contented was more than he could understand.

'Eh! it's an awfu' peety ever ye took tae the sojering!' he exclaimed, speaking from the very depths of his pusillanimous soul.

Dan opened his eyes suddenly at this exclamation.

'What for?' he asked, as if he did not understand what Johnnie meant.

'Weel, ye might be safe an' soond like mysel' if ye hadna gone,' Johnnie explained, hugging the thought of his own wholeness of limb as he looked at Dan's empty sleeve.

'I'd raither be as I am than at hame wi' a whole skin,' said

Dan curtly.

But Johnnie's curiosity was not satisfied by this statement. He drew nearer the bed to question his old friend more closely.

'It'll be jist the airm that's hurt?' he inquired. Dan shook his head. 'There's two three wounds besides,' he said.

'My certy! That'll hurt ye awfae?' Johnnie cried, between horror and interest.

'Hoots! they might be waur,' Dan asserted. It was impossible,

seemingly, to extort any confession of suffering from his lips. An Englishman in the next bed, overhearing this conversation, laughed, and joined in.

'Should hear Jock there whistlin' when 'is wounds is dressed!'
he said. 'You wouldn't ask that question! Sets the whole of us

whistlin' with him, I tell you.'

Johnnie was not sure how to take this statement—whether as jest or earnest: like most of his nation, he did not lean to that habit of chaffing which is innate in a certain class of Englishmen. He listened now, mystified, as this man ran on:—

'Don't do to be downhearted, does it? Clever beggars the Germans, though—managed to reduce me height by two feet! I used to stand five foot nine, must be three-nine now by that measure.

-What price the Germans, eh?'

He might have been speaking Greek, as far as Johnnie was concerned, till Dan explained that his companion had lost both feet. It was really impossible to believe that such a misfortune could have overtaken the man who sat up in bed joking and laughing like a schoolboy. This way of facing calamity was something Johnnie had never seen before; it mystified him. When seasons of affliction descended on the Gilfillan household they were received with lamentation and wringing of hands; yet here he saw men of his own age who accepted disablement without any trace of rebellion against the fate which cut them off from the life of active manhood for ever. One of them even jested about his loss. What could this mean? Johnnie could not understand why they looked so contented either; and now he began to notice that this expression was not confined to Dan and the jocular Englishman—on every side he saw faces that were calm and even cheerful.

No wonder Johnnie was puzzled by this phenomenon. He had never, in all his aimless, disordered life, done his best at any job; so he was a stranger to the peace of heart which follows on honest effort.

The men before him were no saints probably, yet they had offered their bodies a living sacrifice on the altar of their country—and what could men do more? Now their warfare was accomplished: they had done their part, and earned their rest. . . .

But all this was hidden from Johnnie's eyes. He saw no farther than the husk of things—could not guess at the kernel of deep content which lay concealed inside the husk. So he only stood

stupidly there, and repeated over again:

'Gosh! it's a peety ever ye went, MacQueen!'

This second expression of opinion was too much for Dan altogether; he looked Johnnie up and down with a long contemptuous stare.

'I'm thinkin' ye'll no' fall in the first fight!' he said then.

Johnnie had of course heard the proverb before—a survival from old, turbulent days in Scotland when the clans were never long at peace; but it had never been applied to himself till now, and he did not like it. Dan and he had been rivals from boyhood—from the days when they fought at school, and Dan invariably won the battle. Old, imperishable childish grudges seethed up in Johnnie's memory, and he could have hit the helpless wounded man who lay there looking so contented and telling him in so many words that he was a coward.

It was as well, perhaps, that a nurse swept down upon them at this moment, to say that MacQueen was not able for visitors. Feeling had begun to run a little high between the two men.

Johnnie gave a surly nod of farewell and slouched away down the ward to rejoin his companion. . . .

'Have you seen enough—or shall we go into another ward?' the man asked.

Johnnie shook his head—he did not wish to see any more. 'I'm awa,' he repeated as before.

'To enlist?'

'No' me! I'm awa hame—an' I'm no' carin' what onybody says,' he added defiantly, having reference to the taunt MacQueen had hurled at him. They passed out again into the long empty corridors, and as they went along these the stranger continued his advices.

'You're a sensible lad, I see,' he said. 'Don't be taken in with all this flag-waving and drum-beating. Return to the land. That's the true wisdom. Go home and marry and raise a fine family of children, and you'll do more for the State than if you spent your time shooting down other men and devastating the face of the world!'

It is curious how excellent we think any advice which coincides with our own views. As Johnnie listened to all this, he vowed that no more sensible words were ever spoken. The only marvel was, how he had not thought out these truths for himself, how he had been taken in for a day by the specious arguments of the warmongers. He parted from his benefactor at the gate of the

hospital, bidding him a most cordial farewell. And as he walked away, Johnnie held silent, intensely satisfactory communion with himself.

'I'll gang hame,' he thought, 'an' keep the croft an' marry Robina. She'll hae me noo; she was aye awfae sweir tae tak a sojer.'

On the long homeward journey, Johnnie had some thoughts over how it would be wisest to represent his change of front when he arrived at Craske. How would he account to everyone for this turning back? It was not a pleasant thought, but it was more pleasant to him now than the thought of enlisting; of two evils choose the lesser. He had made great professions of eagerness in the service of his country to Mr. Beattie, to Robina, and to his mother; but when he came to think the matter over, he reminded himself that his mother had been violently opposed to the plan, and Robina had derided it, so there was only Mr. Beattie to face. 'An' wha's heedin' Mr. Beattie?' he cried in a brave spirit of reckless defiance. But he was shortly to discover that such curious changes of heart as he had undergone were possible also to other people.

It was actually on his way from the station—on that long, lonely stretch of hill-road which has to be traversed before reaching the village of Craske—that Johnnie had to encounter Mr. Beattie and

explain himself.

'Why, Gilfillan! I heard that you were off to Edinburgh,' the

minister said, pausing on the hill.

Johnnie's eyes somehow sought the ground, not the minister's face.

'Aye, I'm back from Edinbury,' he said. Then, with a slight effort: 'I'm no' tae 'list after a'—it's no' for me.'

'Not going to enlist!—why not? Surely, you passed all the physical tests—a big, strong lad like you?' the minister asked in surprise.

Johnnie shifted uncomfortably from one leg to another, and hesitated for a minute—then, assuming a defiant expression, he asserted that he had seen too much in Edinburgh of one sort and another.

'Seen too much?' Mr. Beattie asked.

'Aye. I'm no' tae lose my legs an' airms an' gang hirplin' a' my days,' said Johnnie.

'So you thought you would leave that pleasant duty to other men?' said Mr. Beattie, a smile dawning round his mouth.

'Weel, let them that likes it gang,' said Johnnie doggedly.

Now Mr. Beattie, as you know, had been the one person who supported Johnnie when he announced his intention of enlisting; but it seemed that the three days which had passed since their interview had changed the minister's view of the case considerably. For, to Johnnie's surprise, this was the answer he made:

'I'm very glad indeed to hear of this decision of yours, Gilfillan; for most certainly it isn't men like you that the country needs—good day to you.' And with that he walked off so abruptly that he was several yards up the road before Johnnie realised that he had gone. What had Mr. Beattie meant exactly, he wondered? He was not quite sure; yet at the back of his mind he felt convinced that the speech had been really very disagreeable.

A little puzzled then, a little defiant, Johnnie trudged down the road, comforting his heart with thoughts of the pleasant welcome he would get at home. 'Gang east, gang west, hame's best,' he quoted to himself. Long familiarity with dirt and untidiness had made him quite insensible to their discomforts; and the thought of returning to that filthy kitchen gave him a certain deep contentment. Effort had been so completely eliminated from the sorry scheme of things in the Gilfillan household, that the thought of his homecoming was to Johnnie much what visions of a feather-bed might be to a tired man. Once back to the cosy shelter of these dirty walls, Johnnie felt all would be well again. He tried to whistle jauntily; but somehow the notes would not come, so he was forced to march on in silence. . . .

Dusk had fallen, and a light showed in the window as he came

up to the cottage door.

The cow was lowing from the byre—neglected as was so often the case—and trying thus to proclaim her woes. A group of dingy and hungry fowls had clustered on to the door-step waiting to be fed—they scattered at Johnnie's approach. The collie inside the house yelped, hearing a step outside. Johnnie lifted the latch of the door and made a dramatic entry into the family circle. Almost he might have studied the action with which he flung his sodden cap upon the floor and cried out: 'I'm hame, mither! The war'll no' see me—I'm no' tae lose my legs an' airms tae the Germans!'

But much to his astonishment no outburst of delight hailed his words: they were received in dead silence. Duncan and Donald exchanged glances and gave a kind of snort of suppressed laughter, but they said nothing; and then Mrs. Gilfillan, following her usual custom when upset about anything, suddenly flung her apron over her head and burst into a storm of tears.

Much at a loss to understand all this, Johnnie begged for an explanation, and slowly, with sobs and chokes, his mother at last

made the state of the case clear to him.

Had not this been the proudest day ever she had known? She wasn't but just through with feeding the hens in the forenoon, when a motor stopped out-by and the Laird and another gentleman came down the brae. "You'll be Mrs. Gilfillan," sez the Laird. "And here's the Duke himsel', Mrs. Gilfillan, wanting men for the army, and he's wanting your Johnnie to join a grand regiment" (I'm forgettin' which it was, for I was that pit aboot). "And it'll be the making of him." And sez I, "Johnnie was that daft to gang, he's aff yesterday—there was nae keepin' him." And sez the gentleman, "Them's the men we're wanting." And sez I, "My Johnnie was aye a grand, braw laddie," and wi'that the Duke himsel' sez, "Let me shake wi' ye, Mistress Gilfillan, it's mithers like you that mak sic sons-it's the mithers o' Scotland we've to thank-just see to all they're giving up !". . . And wi' that he shakes hands (and me just after mixing the hens' meat an' a'), and sez he, "Mind you this, for it's a true word, 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." . . . An' off he went repeatin' over thae words tae himsel', awfae pleased like. And he wasn't more nor an hour later that Mr. Beattie was in, sayin' he was prood o' me-me that was sending my eldest awa' wi'oot grudgin', but I was to hae my reward. . . . And then a' the neeburs was inthere would four or five the ane after t'ither. . . . 'Deed, I've no' got the coo milked yet, nor the hens fed wi' talkin' a' the afternoon -an' noo ye're come hame, an' I'll be affronted afore them

It seemed as if Johnnie would have to listen for the rest of the evening to his mother's continuous lamentations. For the first and in all probability the last time in her life, the good woman had found herself an object of respectful admiration. Hard, indeed, it was to be dragged down off this pedestal when she had only occupied its proud eminence for a few hours.

If she repeated the words of her distinguished visitors once, she repeated them a dozen times, always with a fresh burst of tears, till Johnnie's politeness (never very marked) gave way altogether,

and, bidding her 'haud her clash,' he flung out of the kitchen, slamming the crazy door behind him. His mother and Mr. Beattie had both acted and spoken very strangely; but Johnnie was still assured of an understanding welcome from Robina. Had not her good sense warned him at the outset that this business was but foolishness? He concluded that neither the maternal tears nor the sarcasms of Mr. Beattie were of the least importance. Robina would smile upon him and understand; that was everything. But this had been such an unpleasant day, from first to last, he decided to make it end upon a brighter note. He would not wait until to-morrow to see Robina, the balm of her approval was so urgently needed that he must try to get it at once—there was no doubt about the matter.

It was a brilliant moonlight night now. Johnnie could see every stone in the dyke as he went up to the gate. He stood there looking down the glen, for such nights are rare in the cloudy Highlands. The sad, white radiance flooded every corner of the land with unearthly brightness. Johnnie would have felt more at home on an ink-dark night with pelting showers of sleet. He was unaccustomed to this eerie light, and it acted upon his nerves. The strange sights he had just witnessed came back into his remembrance—the man without the eyes—the man who groaned—the boy who seemed to have no body. . . . What were they all doing now? Had their souls escaped, left that crowded ward, got away, somehow, somewhere?

Johnnie looked up into the terrible blue-black gulf of the vaulted sky with the great moon sailing through it, and trembled till his knees smote together. How unknown was that other world into which we all must venture, soon or late, defenceless, alone, naked even of the flesh that has housed us so long! He prayed his departure might not be soon, that long, long life might be his on the homely earth with Robina. . . . How these men had rushed upon their Fate. . . . They too might have lingered long upon the kind earth, . . . safe in the actual that they knew—that knew them—not launching themselves rashly into Eternity; not standing up before the face of the Judge to whom the secrets of all hearts are revealed; . . . just staying cannily down here, here—here. . . .

To assure himself of actuality, Johnnie stamped on the iron ground that rang to his tread—its firmness reassured his fainting heart—Death and Eternity and the Judge of all the Earth were not here yet, he was man alive still. . . .

Then anxious to rid himself of these haunting thoughts. Johnnie started at a run down the road, to reach the village more quickly and leave the moonlit solitudes of the glen far behind him. He went at such a pace that he had almost passed the very object of his quest-Robina Stuart, basket in hand, on her way to the village shop. But here the moonlight was useful, for Robina recognised him as he strode along.

'Yer surely in an awfu' hurry the night!' she cried gaily.

'Eh, Robina! I was passin' ye!' he declared, halting beside her. A warm sense of comfort stole over his nerves, she looked so real and practical, standing there with her basket-it was a long cry from Robina to Eternity, he thought.

'So yer back from Edinbury?' was her first question. 'It'll be tae bid us all good-bye, of course—and is it the Coldstreams

ve've joined?'

Johnnie drew a little nearer to where she stood, and dropping his voice to a confidential note, prepared to tell his story into her sympathetic ear.

'Weel, no, Robina,' he began. 'Ye see I've changed ma mind a

wee, and I'm no' tae 'list after a'.'

'What's that yer sayin'?' Robina cried.

'Ye see when I came tae think it ower, sez I tae mysel', "I'll dae mair for the country at hame than ever I'll dae abroad; for what's tae come of the country if a' the lads gang aff tae the wars?"-it was yersel' said it, Robina, the ither day, an' indeed it was verra true.'

' That's no' the reason,' said she, and Johnnie saw that she was

laughing.

'Maybe, no' jist a' the truth,' he admitted. 'Ye see I kenned ye wouldna' marry a sojer, Robina, an' I'm gey fond o' ye, my lassie.'

He tried to take her hand in his as he spoke, but she drew it

awav.

'It's a queer thing, then, that I'm to marry a sojer, Johnnie,' she said with a laugh. 'Havena ye heard that me an Dan Mac-Queen's to be married afore the year's oot?'

The world seemed to spin round poor Johnnie at this announcement. He stood silent for a minute and then burst out in indignant

protest.

'Yer jokin', Robina—yer no' speakin' the truth. Dan's in Edinbury Hospital wi'oot his right airm—he'll never can dae a day's wurk again!'

'And have I no' got both my hands?' Robina cried. 'D'ye no' think I can wurk?' She thrust out her small, purposeful red hands towards him with a gesture that was almost dramatic as she continued: 'My certy! Dan'll no' want for onything, I can tell ye! He's a man ye see, Johnnie, not a puir, shauchlin timid body like yersel! I'd wurk the two hands off me for Dan!'

'I wasna feared . . . ,' Johnnie blurted out, unconsciously

revealing the truth.

'Oh, but I ken ye real well,' said the unflinching Robina. 'Ye were aye feared of wurk, and this job's ower heavy for ye. Ye'd be feared ye'd be hurt, and feared ye'd be killed, and awfu' feared o' the Germans!—and there the truth to ye for this once.'

Who can stand before the face of Truth but the man whose heart is without offence? The words of self-justification died on Johnnie's lips—he turned miserably away from Robina and slouched off again up the Glen.

'He that loseth his life,' says the Scripture, 'shall save it'; but equally he that saveth his life may sometimes lose it. Johnnie, if he had only known the truth, had stepped down alive, as it were, into a grave where Courage, Effort, Honour, and Manhood were laid away for ever.

## PEACETIME AFTER WAR.

#### BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

ONE hundred and thirteen years ago this country was entering upon a term of peace after its first tussle with Napoleon. A proclamation by George III. 'given at our Court at Windsor the 25th day of April 1802 in the forty-second year of our reign 'spread the glad tidings. Another proclamation of the same date set forth:

'Whereas it has pleased Almighty God, in His great goodness, to put an end to the late bloody, extended, and expensive War, in which We were engaged; We, therefore, adoring the Divine Goodness, and duly considering that the great and public blessings of Peace do call for public and solemn acknowledgments, have thought fit, by the advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, hereby appointing and commanding, that a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for these his Mercies, be observed throughout those parts of Our United Kingdom called England and Ireland, on Tuesday the first day of June next.'

Among minor treasures picked up in precarious prowling in odd quarters, I became the possessor of a copy of the *Morning Chronicle* of Wednesday, April 28, 1802. It is not a reprint such as is occasionally presented by the proprietors of newspapers reaching their fiftieth or hundredth birthday. It is the actual sheet thumbed more than a century ago by citizens of London

Whose bones are dust.
Whose swords [or scissors] are rust.
Whose souls are with the Lord I trust.

The paper, price sixpence, consists of four pages, nineteen inches long by thirteen broad. It is printed in excellent small type with ink whose virgin blackness a century has scarcely dimmed. At the top of the front page, printed in red ink, is the Treasury Stamp of 3d., without which no newspaper might be sold.

The little sheet, undesignedly, unconsciously prepared for the instruction of a later century, presents a vivid view of life in London when, in that far-off time, peace dawned over the land as, please God, it will presently brighten an England whose might and wealth and teeming population were undreamt of when George III.

was King. Parliament was sitting, and, as compared with the practice in some widely circulated London papers of to-day, exceptionally large space was devoted to the report of its proceedings. We learn, inter alia, that

'The Chancellor of the Exchequer brought down a Message from his Majesty, stating, that his Majesty being desirous that a competent provision should be made for his well beloved sons, the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, and feeling that this could not be done from the Civil List, was induced to refer the matter to his faithful Commons, having the most perfect reliance upon their liberality.'

Another item of personal interest is the notice given by Mr. John Nicholls that 'on Friday se'nnight he will move an address to His Majesty to thank him for having removed the Right Hon. William Pitt from his Councils.' In the previous year George III., whose stubborn head was bent against a proposal for Catholic emancipation, had manœuvred out of office a great statesman whose valise he was not worthy to carry. Pitt's forced retirement, which did not last long, gave great pleasure to mean spiteful minds. Hence the tabling of this motion by obscure John Nicholls.

The Irish question, which like the poor has been with us ever since, was to the fore at this sitting of Parliament on April 27, 1802. The report of a Committee to inquire into the interference of Irish Peers at elections was taken into consideration. Other bills affecting Ireland, united to Great Britain only a few years earlier, were debated.

In Committee on the Exports and Imports Duty Bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement Mr. Lloyd George will read with interest. In a few lines it indicates the gigantic strides British commerce has made within a period briefly exceeding a century.

'In 1793,' the Chancellor said, 'our imports amounted to £19,000,000, and in 1801, to £29,000,000; our exports in 1793 to £18,000,000, and in 1801 to £25,000,000. Our exports of foreign goods in 1793, to £6,000,000, and in 1801 to £17,000,000. Since 1793 there had been an increase of registered vessels of 2798; of tons of shipping 365,000; and of men employed in trading vessels 25,375.'

In the financial year 1913-4—the latest date available—imports of merchandise amounted to £768,734,739; exports £634,820,326.

Such theatres as London possessed at that day were open, some embarrassed by the sudden incursion of events connected with the 'Proclamation of Peace.'

'Mrs. Billington presents her respects to the Ladies and Gentlemen who have done her the honour of engaging Boxes for her Benefit, and to the Public at large, and begs leave to inform them, that on account of the Illuminations intended To-morrow, the Proprietors have kindly consented to defer her Night till Friday next, on which evening their Majesties Servants will act an Opera, in three acts, called "Algonah."

Mrs. Siddons was playing at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, with promise of 'Macbeth on Monday next; Macbeth Mr. Kemble,

Lady Macbeth Mrs. Siddons.'

Mr. Incledon was singing at the rival house at Covent Garden. 'On Friday next being his benefit he will, among other favourites, sing Gay's admired old ballad "Black Ey'd Susan."' Later, at the same theatre, Mr. Cooke was to appear in 'The Iron Chest,' taking the part of Sir Edward Mortimer. Why does not some enterprising manager of our day—Sir Beerbohm Tree to wit—revive a drama that a hundred years ago caused our forefathers' flesh to creep in a manner that would have satisfied the highest aspirations of the Fat Boy?

On the evening of the appearance of this news sheet 'their Majesties Servant at Drury Lane will perform'—in those days managers did not 'present'—'" The Winter's Tale." Leontes Mr. Kemble; Hermione Mrs. Siddons; Perdita by a Young Lady being her seventh appearance on any stage. Shakespeare was followed by a farce called 'The Devil to Pay,' Mrs. Jordan taking the part of Nell. A paragraph in another column states that 'Mrs. Jordan has adjusted her engagements with the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre at forty-five guineas per week,' a monstrous

fee in those days.

Mr. Crummles, on tour, finding in a local paper a laudatory reference to his show, used to 'wonder how these things got in the papers.' Here in the Morning Chronicle of April 28, 1802, is a breathless paragraph which, though the date makes it impossible to have been penned by Mr. Crummles' own hand, shows how marvellously close was Dickens's conception of his literary style:

'Welcome Peace restored. We may expect daily additions to Pidcock's Royal Menagerie, Exeter 'Change, by importation of

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fresh animals from every quarter of the globe, in order to keep up the well-deserved reputation of his incomparable selection many of the creatures in Pidcock's possession being to be met with in no other, and when we regard the novelty, beauty, and the innumerable variety contained in the admirable collection, we can by no means wonder that the Royal Menagerie is so great a favourite with the public and the Exeter 'Change continues the pleasing and fashionable resort of all the genteel company in the kingdom.

'Old' Sadler's Wells was, it will be observed, once new.

'Nothing can equal the sterling merit of the entertainments of the new Theatre, Sadler's Wells, except the quantity and quality of the audiences they attract. This Theatre boasts a Company unparalleled, and the performances are so judiciously disposed that every performer is shewn to the greatest advantage; and the evening's recreation combines the strongest beauties of novelty, mirth and rationality.'

Several public dinners were announced. The Society of Guardians for the Protection of Trade against Swindlers and Sharpers celebrated their anniversary dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand. 'Tickets ten and sixpence each. Dinner on the table at 5 o'clock precisely.' To citizens at the West End of London who issue cards of invitation for dinner at 8.15 and think themselves lucky if the company is seated at the table by 8.30, the hour seems a little early. Gentlemen interested in the City of London Lying-In Hospital made provision for an even longer evening. 'Dinner on table at 4 o'clock precisely' is the terse intimation in the advertisement. To this day some City Companies preserve the old tradition of early dining, sitting down to an abundant meal not later than half-past six.

Utilising their special advantages, the founders of this still flourishing charity advertise an attraction that must have been irresistible to Aldermen and fathers of families. 'Several of the women, lately delivered at this hospital, will,' it was announced, 'attend with their infants.' It is difficult to conceive any adventitious circumstance more conducive to the enjoyment and vivacity

of a quiet hour after a ten and sixpenny dinner.

In the competition for originality in the attraction of dinners the Duke of Portland easily takes the second place. His birthday happening on a Friday, his Grace, with a liberal hospitality that marks the ducal house of to-day, gave not one but three dinners on successive days. 'Lady Carrington, on Monday night, gave a

splendid ball at her house in St. James's-place, which was crowded by a long list of Nobility and Persons of Fashion.' It will be noticed that the family name is spelt with two 'r's.' There was on this matter a difference of opinion among the latest generation, some spelling their name with one 'r' and some with two.

On this eve of what was fondly hoped would be a long era of peace, 'the Lord Mayor, after examining the Mealweigher's reports of the average prices of wheat and flour, ordered the price of bread to continue at 10d. the quartern loaf wheaten, and household  $8\frac{1}{2}d$ .'

Best coal sold at 41s. per chaldron of thirteen sacks. Three

per cent. Consols stood at seventy-seven.

According to parochial returns made by the clergy, it appears that there were nearly 7,000,000 acres of corn grown in England in the year 1801, of which 1,400,000 acres were of wheat. An additional tax upon windows, falling with special severity on the middle class and the poor, was warmly resented. It appears to have been submitted in partial substitution of the Income Tax repealed in a bill read a third time in the House of Commons on the day preceding this issue of the Morning Chronicle. A new lottery scheme was announced with the stipulation that no prize should exceed £30,000 in value, and none less than £17. This form of gambling was encouraged by the Government, a partner in its profits. In addition to Stamp Duty a fee of £50 was paid for the license of every office in town for the sale of tickets and £10 for every one in the country.

There are a couple of personal references to Napoleon, at this date still bearing the title of First Consul. It is recorded how, when the Standards of the Consular Guard were consecrated at Notre Dame, he crossed himself several times. He was less reverential in view of preparations for the ceremony. When the leader of the band submitted to him a plan of procedure in which the orchestra were placed in the forefront, the First Consul peremptorily rejected it. 'Let the music go into a tribune,' he said. 'I will have a battalion of troops in front and rear rangés en bataille.' The bandmaster pointed out that in such circumstances the music would be lost. 'That doesn't matter,' tartly replied the Consul,

'I'll have the soldiers in front of me.'

Of Napoleon's despotic treatment of literary people whom he didn't like, later illustrated in the case of Madame de Staël, a case is cited. A dramatic author named Dupaty brought out on the Parisian stage a piece called 'Le Valet Maître,' which was not free

from suspicion of girding at the august personality of the First Consul. After an exceptionally successful night on the stage, Dupaty received an early morning call from the police who loaded him with chains and shipped him off to San Domingo.

Even at this date the Morning Chronicle, which in time grew to be a formidable rival of the Times, appears to have been financially flourishing. Its back page is composed of solid columns of sales by auction which I believe rank amongst the most highly priced class of advertisements. Looking through them one is beset by two reflections. One is the almost pastoral aspect presented a hundred years ago by what are to-day crowded districts of the Metropolis. The other dwells sadly on an opportunity (never presented) of purchasing at the current price of 1802 some houses, gardens, and plots of pasture-land. On such terms possession to-day would make one rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

In the City Road is offered for sale:

'A Genteel and substantial Brick Messuage, most commodiously situate on the East side of the City Road, near the New Chapel, and a small distance from Finsbury-square; the fore court enclosed with strong iron railing, and paved way to door, and garden laid out and planted. The house contains a suit of good apartments, with kitchen and useful offices on the basement; the whole in complete and substantial repair, replete with every convenience, and fit for the immediate reception of a genteel family.'

Also there is to be sold:

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'A Valuable and very desirable Freehold Estate, consisting of fifteen acres of very rich pasture land, in one enclosure, called Grice's Field, situate in the parish of Stepney, near Rhodes Well, a short distance from Limehouse and Stepney Churches, and in the high road to Bow.'

If these be too townish there is on hand:

'A Valuable and very desirable Freehold Estate, delightfully situate on the West Side of Clapham Common, the property and residence of John Wedderburn, Esq., comprising a commodious Brick Dwelling-house and Offices, erected on a pleasing elevation. The principal apartments handsomely fitted up, and the domestic offices conveniently arranged, with coach house for two carriages, and stabling for five horses, fore-court, and extensive pleasure ground, and garden, walled round, (excepting about forty feet which is oak fence,) clothed with choice fruit trees, fully cropped

and well supplied with water. Also, two rich Paddocks, one of which is planted with fine thriving fruit trees, and bordered by gravel walks and shrubbery, and inclosed by oak paling. The whole containing near Eleven Acres.'

If residence on the banks of the Thames be desired, Mr. Phillips offers

'on the premises this day at twelve o'clock A Compact Villa, with Stabling for four Horses, double Coach-house, and competent Offices of every description, excellent Garden, well cropped and planted; Green-house, Pleasure Ground, Yard and Fore-Court; comprised in about two acres, pleasantly situated on the Banks of the Thames, at Battersea, in the county of Surrey, commanding uninterrupted views of the river and the surrounding country; distance from London about four miles.'

That is the sort of place with which Mr. John Burns, while still President of the Board of Trade with a salary of £5,000 a year, might have been content, like the Shunammite woman, to dwell among his own people.

I wonder what in crowded Battersea stands to-day on the site of that compact villa? Where is the freehold estate on the west side of Clapham Common? Where the fifteen acres of rich pasture land in the parish of Stepney? And where are the snows of yester year?

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# CHATHAM 1914. BY A SAILOR'S WIFE;

# I.—BEFORE THE WAR.

An ugly place is Chatham, with scarcely an outstanding feature, save its Town Hall, to break the squalid monotony of its streets. On the west it immediately adjoins Rochester, its far more dignified neighbour, one High Street merging imperceptibly into the other. Eastward lies Gillingham, a modern town of small, new houses, useful and undistinguished, which shelter the families of thousands of sailors and dockyard men; but a broad stretch of rough grass, known as the Lines, separates its row upon row of red brick and stucco from Chatham, and forms a valuable air-space and playground, burnt up and dusty, or swept by wind and rain (and always paper-haunted), for the dwellers on both sides of it.

There are four sets of barracks in Chatham: one for the Royal Engineers, one for the Line regiment, one for the Navy, and one for the Royal Marine Light Infantry; and, most important of all, its 'Establishments'—its raison d'être, in fact—His Majesty's Dockyard. Upon all these centres of activity the great and admirably-planned Naval Hospital looks down from the far side of the Lines, magnificent in its spaciousness, and enclosing lawns and flower-beds of a vigorous gaiety astounding and unaccountable, where distracted gardeners, poor soil, and extreme exposure to every wind that blows might be expected to furnish only borders of the hardier weeds, edged with storm-proof oyster-shells.

Behind high blank walls the Dockyard spreads itself along a muddy estuary, and on five days of the week the clang and whir and thud of the machinery behind those walls make the neighbourhood trying to all but the incurably deaf. At certain hours the hands, pallid and grimy, pour in or out through its gates in such crowds as block traffic and embarrass the average wayfarer by presenting front, rear, and flanks all equally impervious to his passage. Strings of tram-cars await the outward-bound tide at the gates, swallowing all they can contain and moving heavily away,

and hundreds of bicycling mateys, regardless of its rules, add to the perils of the road. If one should be lucky enough to find oneself in the neighbourhood of the Naval Barracks when the Dockyard empties itself into the town, it were wise to seek shelter within its gates and so escape the enveloping hordes which deviate not one hair's-breadth from their route for man, woman, or child; no, nor would they for an angel with a flaming sword if he tried to bar the way.

Inside the Barracks' grounds one can pause to draw breath and inhale the sweetness of its well-protected rose-garden, lingering perhaps to read the inscription on the monument erected close by to the memory of French prisoners of war who died during their detention on St. Mary's Island more than a hundred years ago—an inscription which, for simplicity and good feeling and style,

could hardly be bettered.

Here are gathered together

The remains of many brave soldiers and sailors

Who, having once been the foes, afterwards the captives, of England,

Now find rest in her soil,

Remembering no more the animosities of war or the sorrows of imprisonment.

They were deprived of the consolation of closing their eyes amongst the countrymen they loved,

But they have been laid in an honourable grave
By a nation which knows how to respect valour and sympathise with
misfortune.\*

It is surprisingly easy to lose one's way in Chatham Dockyard, and as its various roads and passages, penitentially cobble-stoned, are unnamed, it takes a stupid person some time to learn its geography. Alluring notice-boards, white, with clear black lettering, attract the stupid person, but as they only bear the cryptic words, 'Whistle and go slow,' they are not really illuminating. Still there are policemen to be met with—members of the Metropolitan Force, than whom none are more helpful and indulgent towards an obviously pacific female—and, directed by one of them, the wanderer in search of an exit proceeds westward between piles of well-seasoned timber—oak, teak, and pine—each balk inscribed

<sup>\*</sup> In the Spectator of February 27 a correspondent quotes this epitaph, but it was incorporated in this article before that date.

with its name and grade; past the prim little Georgian houses inhabited by Dockyard officials and known, unofficially, as Harmony Row; past old Admiralty House-there is a big new one now looking on to the Lines-with its dignified Adam ceilings and chimney-pieces and its shady, terraced garden; and finally out through the turreted red-brick main gate, bearing the Royal Arms in red and gold over its central archway, into the dreary, colourless town. The barrow-loads of fruit and flowering plants have departed with the departure of the mateys who patronise them, but there is life still, since, scorching along on rickety, hireling bicycles, come four midshipmen off for week-end leave. Just outside the gate the last of the quartet hastily dismounts. It is a case of a bad puncture, and while the poor boy is still bending over his azurepainted crock the others have passed out of sight. But midshipmen are past-masters in resource and expedient, and it would not be surprising to hear that the boy has borrowed a bicycle from the police sergeant (or the Admiral Superintendent himself) and sped upon his way, before the uselessly sympathetic spectator of his breakdown had traversed half a mile of her homeward road.

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#### II.-DURING THE WAR.

Chatham is a very different place now. Its ugliness is forgotten, and its intense vitality, threaded through with heart-rending reminders of grief and loss, is its most salient feature. Night and day the Dockyard throbs with the beating of a thousand hammers. The white-faced mateys seem inspired as they go about their tasks of constructing, refitting, and repairing. Their energy and enthusiasm are every bit as fine and important as the valour and dogged resistance of their brothers at the Front or in the North Sea, amongst whom there are many Reservists, themselves Dockyard hands before the war called them away. The war has brought a brimming tide of prosperity to the mateys and their families, and they deserve it. 'Overtime all the time' is the order of the day. and hundreds of recruits ('paying guests,' in truth) are billeted in their homes on either side of the Lines. They work with the unquenchable ardour which no money can buy. See them repairing the battered plates of the Arethusa-'saucy' indeed-and her destroyer-children after the Heligoland fight. Their hammers ring with as martial a note as any bugle, and in a space of time unparalleled for shortness the work is completed and the little grey

ships again take the bleak road to the North Sea, as staunch as before and keener than ever; live things all of them, and restored to life by the spirit and skill of the very men who a month or two earlier so gladly left and so reluctantly re-entered the Dockyard gates.

The Town Hall at Chatham, which to most of us before the war merely marked the central junction for tramway traffic, is now the headquarters of relief work for soldiers' and sailors' families, and the Mayor and his staff have become the generous and long-suffering hosts of several ladies' committees. Members of these committees. with anxious or harassed faces, pass in and out; soldiers' and sailors' wives-many with babies in their arms and little children trailing behind them-penetrate to the committee-rooms to obtain pay and advice, or linger round the notice-boards at the doors. The ladies of the Friendly Union of Sailors' Wives register names and addresses by the thousand, give news of hospital patients, cut out useful garments and distribute mourning, and are always ready with consoling and cheering words and comforting cups of tea for the inquirers who drift in and out, nervous, restless, torn with doubts and fears as to the safety of their men. Thirteen days of racking suspense elapsed after the sinking of the three cruisers before full and authentic lists of the lost could be published, and every day of those thirteen days wives and mothers came down to look for news, with faces growing hourly more lined and haggard, their eyes dimmer and more sunken from want of sleep and the gradual draining away of hope. 'Brave' is no adequate word for them. Tears there were, but no hysterical ravings. A piteous dignity was theirs, that none who strove to comfort them will ever forget. A Hogue baby was born twenty-four hours after her father was drowned, but her mother refused to believe that all was not well, and on the twelfth day was down in her kitchen nursing the little creature and still contriving to smile when the official news that her husband was among the lost was brought to her, and she smiled no more. 'He is such a grand swimmer,' said a wife who could not think herself a widow, and I know he would swim, if it was a hundred miles, to get home to me. Seven years married we've been and never a cross word. . . . Hush then, baby, or I'll tell your daddy.'

Thousands of recruits are drilling on the Lines and in the barrack squares—recruits who learn their duties in as many days as they would have required weeks before the war. It would be hard to beat those of the Royal Engineers for intelligence, physique, and zeal, and it is a delight to watch the drummer-boys (all sappers' sons) on the parade ground—heads up, shoulders back, martial to the tips of their toes, and proud to bursting point. Even the brand-new recruits, being marched into barracks from the railway station, march; and as they get their uniform piecemeal—here a military cap over mufti, there a khaki tunic over blue serge trousers and tennis shoes—each one turns, by a transformation almost as magically swift as Cinderella's, into a fighting man; lean, keen, alert, inspired.

Up at the Naval Hospital the flowers went on blooming till the frost cut them down; hundreds of beds awaited the wounded; surgeons and nurses were ready, and tons of 'sick comforts' stacked wherever space could be found. But only a handful of wounded and injured came. They were a negligible quantity, since the casualty list for the Chatham Division was mainly a list of drowned.

I. M. P.

#### STRASBOURG.

AN EPISODE OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

BY PAUL AND VICTOR MARGUERITTE.
TRANSLATED BY S. G. TALLENTYRE.

#### CHAPTER V.

M. GERMATH and André were coming back from the ramparts. An officer, who was a friend of theirs, had given them a pass, and they had been allowed to go through the city gates, and for the first time for nearly three weeks had beheld the familiar landscape—greatly changed, with the country covered with water, whence emerged only the trunks of poplar trees and the smoking ruins of Montagne-Verte. Among branches of beeches and willow, through the orchards, pike could be seen chasing the small fish, and astonished birds flew above the inundation.

For a long while the two Strasbourgers had refreshed their eyes with the sight of the wide, peaceful horizon, and drawn deep breaths of the pure air which a light breeze brought from the Vosges. There was a pause in the firing. The furious cannonade which had set fire to Kehl four days earlier no longer shook the heavens.

Thus, short truces were called between life and death.

With a pleasure at once real and melancholy, M. Germath and André trod the brown earth and the short stubble beneath their feet, and dwelt with fond eyes on that soil to which they were attached by a thousand ties—the soil of their Alsace—the soil of France. These rows of trees, these roads, the shape of the hills, the colour of the water—all had been familiar to them from earliest childhood; formed part of themselves; encircled and completed their lives. They thought this city and country the most beautiful in the world, and to see them under the scourge of war made them, if possible, dearer still.

The resumption of the firing, the whistle of bullets above their heads, and the shriek of shells compelled them to throw themselves

down in a furrow.

They got up, moved, but not frightened—they had almost

enjoyed clasping the earth with open arms, and the good smell of clods and grass.

M. Germath smiled and said, pointing to the field where they were walking, 'Why, there are carrots here! Quite enough for a nice dish; and your mother and uncle are so fond of them!'

And, with kindly thought—André helping—he tore up quite a number, filled his pockets, and made a bouquet of the remainder, the tops serving as leaves and the red cones as the flowers.

Even in the pleasures of the table, which played so large a part in their honest provincial life, even in the fresh foliage and dusty roots of this everyday vegetable, they felt the charm of the fertility, the richness, and the beauty of their Strasbourg land.

Further on, hops, sending tendrils up the poles in tangled masses, reminded them of the beer, light or dark, which flowed like a river in all that countryside, filled hundreds of casks in the cellars of the breweries, and foamed in great tankards in the midst of the smoke of pipes and the uproar of conversation.

Back again in the town, they heard the excellent news of the decisive victory of Bazaine, and of the extermination—root and branch—of the army of Frederick-Charles by the mitrailleuses. The streets were full of people, of greetings and congratulations.

'It's a certainty!' Wohlfart declared, when they found him at Kermer's *brasserie*, where the fat Suzel, in high spirits, promptly brought them tankards.

The Germaths crossed the Broglie, sceptical, yet comforted—the illusion was so pleasant! It softened the melancholy they had felt in passing the ruins in the National quarter and the two magnificent firs, with their spires, scorched but still standing, dating from the Reformation. They forgot the funeral they had seen, winding its way to the Botanical Garden, now transformed into a cemetery since funerals could no longer pass out of the town; it had sharply reminded them of the death of little Noémi. They did not even stop in front of the placards on which General Uhrich announced to the people the imminence of the siege and promised arms to citizens selected by the mayor.

As the fields and slopes, and the great sheet of water stretched at the foot of the ramparts, had made them deeply sensible of their love for their native soil, in the same way the town of Strasbourg claimed them as her own—won their hearts with her monuments, her lofty houses with their tiled roofs, her narrow streets and crossroads, so impregnated with the spirit of antiquity that the modern thoroughfares and new shops, and the animation of the fashionable quarters, could not spoil this survival of the shapes, the colours, the

odours of the past.

The continuance of a race and the persistence of its traditions were confirmed in the old stone of the churches, in the towers and gates, the immemorial flow of the green waters, in the poor districts where poverty seemed eternal, and in the Jews' quarters, whose dirt recalled the ancient ghettos.

All the streets had names drawn from the common needs of life—names of things or beasts, names of arts or crafts—as also names from the blood-stained annals of wild days. The Burnt Street perpetuated the memory of the extermination of the Jews, who, accused of spreading the Black Death, had perished to the number of two

thousand in their burning houses.

Axe, Shield, and Halberd Streets contrasted in their martial severity with the homeliness of Soap Street, Parchment Street, Kettle, Lace, Leather Bottle, and Lanthorn Streets . . . while there were further Streets of Boatmen, Butchers, Trussers, Writers, and Tripe-merchants, and those to which the popular fancy had given appellations charming or absurd—Gold Street and Rose Bath Street,

Blue Clouds, Maids, and Water-soup Street,

M. Germath and André presently passed the Hôtel de Ville; they had often admired and sauntered through the rooms on the ground floor, where the Academies of Painting and Sculpture had arranged the canvases of Guido, Tintoretto, Correggio, Perugino, and a 'Passion' and 'Christ Crowned' of Martin Schoen. André recalled the portrait of Rigault's wife—a charming head—and two statues by Ohmacht—'Flora' and 'Venus'; but he preferred the casts from the antique in the first room. M. Germath, with less taste for art, thought of the precious treasure of the municipal archives, wherein were preserved the privileges granted to Strasbourg by the Emperors, the deeds of the Diets, some imperial charters of the end of the thirteenth century, the records of the colleges, and the documents of the Mint.

They came down by the Rue des Étudiants, towards the square of the New Church. The great building—majestic, old as the ages, divided into two by a passage—displayed the full extent of its dark

monuments.

The nave was used as the Protestant church, and the Germaths, although faithful to the Church of Saint Thomas, knew by heart the four rows of arches and pillars that separated the Gothic vaultings, and could recall Silbermann's organs and that half-defaced fresco of the Dance of Death, with its popes, cardinals, and bishops . . .

The choir, arranged in rooms and used as the library, contained the mind of Strasbourg-some of the wisest and loveliest creations of human thought and of religious art-a hundred and fifty thousand volumes, among which were to be found many of the chefs-d'œuvre of knowledge; rare manuscripts, specimens of early printing from the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the collections of Sturm and of the Jesuits of Bockenheim, illuminated missals, the priceless Hortus Deliciarum of the Abbess Herrade de Landsperg, and a collection of prayers of the eighth century, on purple vellum, with gold and silver lettering.

All André's youth-serious and somewhat precocious-had been

permeated by the spirit of this temple of knowledge and silence. Several times a week he used to come and pore over these books. which had opened to him the world of imagination, the wide field of history, and countless phases of thought. Living in a world of his own, these books had developed his mind and uplifted his heart. In the glorious inspiration of the poets-Hugo, Vigny, Lamartine; in the stately magnificence of the prose writers—Chateaubriand and Michelet—he had found his best leaders and teachers; while in the heroines of romance, those gentle shades of love-Mme. de Mortsauf, with her snowy shoulders, and Mme. de Rénal, with her blue eyeshe saw Lise, in her grace and simplicity, so much the more levely that she was real flesh and blood, the living and breathing miracle, a tangible delight, and, to-morrow, his own.

To-morrow? Alas!

The Rue des Orfèvres led them to the Cathedral. Opposite the old houses, with their sculptured woodwork beams, it displayed its triple porch, surmounted by the rose window; its body of red sandstone, supported by powerful buttresses and flanked by two towers whose lofty windows rose one above the other, behind slender pillars. The tower on the left stopped short at the roof; the righthand tower rose higher, and from the octagonal turret which crowned it sprang the bold and lofty spire—a pyramid, cut in steps, a stairway to heaven, with a cross for pinnacle.

The Minster!—that monument to the faith of centuries and the glory of kings-old by virtue of its endless years, and ever-young by virtue of its ceaseless renovation and rebuilding-from Clovis' church of wattle to Charlemagne's-from the first stone of the towers laid by Bishop Conrad to the completion of the spire by Jean Hültz!

Fire and earthquake had attacked it in vain; in vain had a thunderbolt damaged the spire and the leaden roof—the building, uplifted by the burning enthusiasm of centuries, had raised itself little by little until it was, as the Germaths saw it to-day, one of the loftiest in the world, the pride of Strasbourg and the noblest jewel in her crown.

Overpowering as a whole, exquisite in detail, this Leviathan of sculpture was at once single and multiple, infinitely diverse and yet as simple as beauty itself. Between its portals, on its pillars, in its cornices lived a whole people in stone: low-reliefs grinned, grimaced, and twisted under the swell of the arches; while above, in the air, gargoyles, grotesque beasts, the creatures

of a nightmare, overhung all.

The efforts of generations of thinkers, builders, and workmen had been spent in the shadows of crypt, and nave, and choir, and on the sunny walls of the triforium; here and there, where there had been some accidental fall or subsidence, the stones had been cemented with blood; and, in the dim, religious light from the stained-glass windows, thousands and thousands of worshippers had murmured the canticles of love or the litanies of death, as the organs rolled and swelled.

Both the Germaths were touched, for the Cathedral was not less to them than the New Church. André had constantly wandered in the peaceful nave, watching the ruby and purple light fall athwart it through the stained glass, or been amused by the moving figures in the astronomical clock, whose mechanism he had often explained to Charles: the angel who sounded the quarters of the hours; above, the Four Ages—child, stripling, man, old man—revolving round Time; while a sprite turned the hour-glass and Death struck the hour: and, higher still, the twelve Apostles who, at noon, turned towards Christ, who lifted His hand to bless them, while the cock flapped his wings and crowed three times.

Further on was the Guild-house, covered with carved figures of musicians in wood; further still, the Frauenhaus, with its Renaissance grace; and many old palaces fallen to baser uses each a typical Strasbourg house, framed of stone and timber, which

filled father and son with delight.

. . . No! surely it was impossible that such a town should suffer further, that any part of it should be destroyed by shells!

This senseless bombardment, these brutal threats, would remain threats only! Besides, deliverance was at hand... Bazaine was victorious!... the French were at the doors!...

But André became suddenly red, and then pale. At the turn of a street, Mum, the Ansberques' poodle, caught sight of them and, yapping joyfully, rushed to meet them. He was a friend, anyhow; he had nothing to do with his masters' quarrels. And then, escorted by a maid, Lise appeared. Her face expressed a painful hesitation between joy and fear. At last—she had found André again, but an André changed and thinner. She knew he must have suffered, and longed to run to him. But her father had given strict orders she was not to take the slightest notice of him; of him, who for fifteen years had been her companion, her friend, her brother-her lover. She would have turned and fled, but her limbs were as heavy as lead; and an unknown force impelled her to go to him in spite of the remonstrances of the maidan elderly, plain person, who kept on saying, 'Mademoiselle, you are not to do it-you are not to do it; if anyone hears of it, all the blame will be put on me. . . '

And the worst, or the best, of this inevitable meeting was that Mum declined to let André pass, and kept coming back to him with an insistent, sly air, as who would say, 'Don't you see her?

Be quick! What are you waiting for?'

André did not hesitate, and, before his father could stop him in point of fact, Germath did not wish to stop him—he had crossed

the road, and walked straight up to Lise.

She watched him come with a grieved expression, which gave place to a childlike happiness. She too was changed and thinner. In her dark blue dress, and the little cape he knew so well, with her straw hat with its black velvet ribbon, she looked more frail and delicate than usual, with her nerves at high tension. She certainly did not yield to fate; she fought it. He saw in her eyes that tender light which shone from her soul in moments of emotion; at the same time, her face had in it both constraint and determination, as if her filial obedience and her maidenliness were at war with some strong and undefined emotion.

Had she confessed to herself, during their separation, that she loved André? No! She had prayed and wept alone in her room, and something—the best part of herself—was suddenly gone from her. Yet, all the same, she continued to go about the house, and do everything exactly as usual and as if nothing had happened. She neither rebelled nor complained—that was not in her nature; between the blustering autocracy of her father and the minute watchfulness of her mother, she lived under strict

restraint; respected both parents, but without demonstrativeness and without surrender. They thought her very calm, and, as she was docile, reconciled themselves to her position. They knew that she grieved, but she said nothing; so they assured each other

that she would forget.

M. Ansberque did not believe in love; ambition, success, a substantial income-nowadays, these are the things that count: but passion—all stuff and nonsense! Mme. Ansberque did believe in it, but merely as a passing feeling suitable to courtship—rather like a spring ailment; all young girls had it, but recovered, and, once married, took their rôle seriously, managed the house, paid visits, and occupied themselves with charities, in company with other right-minded ladies. She could not possibly conceive any affection not approved by the family; it became criminal directly it was forbidden. To her thinking, a young girl's heart could turn over as easily as a glove. She undoubtedly wished Lise to be happy, but according to the maternal idea of happiness. Besides, who could possibly know better than her parents who was a desirable husband for her? Mme. Ansberque, though so eager to be first and so fond of power, had moreover a religious veneration for her husband, and bowed to his superior knowledge, enlightenment, and experience. He had ordained-that was sufficient. And yet, all the same, she was fond of André, and the whole affair grieved

André and Lise were together again, and everything they had longed to say, all that was swelling in their hearts and panting for

utterance, remained untold.

Was it the hampering presence of a third person? Yes, but still more the presence of each other—the painful difficulty of expressing their feelings and of finding the words which, directly they had parted, they would bitterly regret they had left unspoken.

'I am so glad to see you!' was all André could bring himself

to say.

'And I am so glad too!' said Lise's eyes, but her lips did not

get beyond a smile.

And there they stood, covered with confusion, while Mum, as if to draw them together, stood on his hind legs between them—first putting his paws on André's knees, and then on Lise's skirt.

'It was he who recognised us,' said André. And he patted the

dog as gently as if he pressed Lise's hand.

When M. Germath came up to them, he greeted Lise in his usual fatherly manner; she coloured, and said, much moved, 'Please give my best love to my aunt—' she always spoke thus of Mme. Germath—' and be sure and tell her how fond I am of her!'

And without looking again at André she rejoined the maid, and they walked away—Mum tearing after them.

'Poor child!' said M. Germath. And the two men made their way home in silence.

André was both wretched and enraged with himself. Knowing that his sudden appearance, his manifest distress, and his imploring looks had agitated Lise, he bitterly reproached himself for his silence, and cursed his stupidity. What must she think of him? How would she guess all that his heart was now calling out to her

so volubly and ardently?

'Lise, my dear,' he fancied himself saying, 'I have been lying in wait for you everywhere! Only last night I was prowling about under your window, thinking of you and loving you! The whole thing must be a bad dream! They never can part us! How can you live without me? How can I ever do without you? Our parents have their plans and ideas and their own way of looking at things; but we have nothing but our love. Are there two ways of caring for Strasbourg and France? Do you even understand why they are angry? I do not! Death and disaster seem in the air: why do you leave me, and why do I leave you? In such dangerous times it is worse than folly to part for a moment: come with me-let us take shelter anywhere, in any corner-like birds in a storm; and then, if the thunderbolt falls on us, at least we shall die together. Come, Lise, come! You will be my wife before God and man; and our love is stronger than the wishes of your family, stronger than respect for the opinion of the world, stronger than these terrible events! Let us fly, let us die if you will! Anything is better than being parted—my dearest Lise my hope . . . my life! . . .

And far from him, very far, though only a few streets away— Lise, as the house-door shut behind her, murmured with a full

heart and silent lips :-

'André, above all, don't be ill! How pale you were! And I felt as if I could hardly stand—I don't know what it is I feel! I only know that I think, see, and dream of nothing but you! They have not really separated us: you are there, close to me.

Yesterday, when I was playing your favourite Beethoven sonata, I felt you behind me in your low chair, and burst into tears. . . . How stupid you must have thought me just now! I could not say a word! I was dumfounded! But I shall live on that meeting, and go over its smallest details. I kissed Mum for catching sight of you. André, my heart bleeds, and yet its pain is a pleasure. Is that love? What a wonderful mystery! Papa said this morning, when he came off night-duty on the ramparts, "We may be bombarded to-night: they are capable of not leaving one stone on another in Strasbourg." And though he is so brave and has such a warlike look in his old artillery-captain's uniform which still suits him, as he looked at mother and me two tears fell down his cheeks. I am not afraid of the shells, André, nor of death. I only fear one thing—that you may cease to love me.'

Even while André and Lise talked thus across space, the cyclone of fire hanging over the town burst on it with a whirl

and a crash.

At the house opposite the Ansberques', there was a fearful explosion; every window was smashed, the shutters were torn away; a bomb, piercing the roof, had exploded in the cellar. At the Germaths' a gable-end was smashed off, and the tiles rained down.

Uncle Anselme, from his window, watched the streaks of flame and the shells shoot across the sky; when they fell, they threw

up great jets of fire.

On that, came a storm of screams and cries, a thunder of things collapsing, of the smashing and splintering of wood, of the jingling of iron, the clatter of stones, shells bursting with the whir of rising partridges, everywhere shrieks of agony, the groans of wounded beasts; and, over all, a fierce light from burning houses which poured out volumes of red smoke.

'Fire! Fire!'

'Fire! at the Museum! Fire! at the citadel!'

Presently an odour of scorching and a heat as from a stove began to spread; blue flames ran like Will-o'-the-wisp over the roof of a warehouse; then the granaries of straw burst out into torrents of fire with a smothered roar; towards the west, great conflagrations flamed, under a rain of flakes of fire and sparks that hissed as they fell.

Uncle Anselme, haggard of face, realising the truth at last,

cried with a loud voice, 'Strasbourg is on fire!'

## CHAPTER VI.

'The time has come! We shall need all our courage,' said M. Germath to his wife. 'We must put our trust in God, who sees and judges.'

But Mme. Germath, though she was very pale, did not quail. For five days she had had constantly before her eyes the terrible picture of little Noémi's disfigured body, and still saw, with a revulsion of her whole being, the blood-stained cloth that had

enwrapped it, and the poor, torn flesh. . . .

She had been one of the first to arrive on the scene. Another little girl at the school had been literally cut in two; and Mme. Germath had heard the heartrending cries of the other injured children—one had had her leg cut off, and another both her hands; while a third had a wound in her shoulder into which one could have put one's fist. Sister Basilice, herself livid as death, with a blood-stained bandage about her head, had said to her, in a voice which shook so much that her teeth chattered, 'They murder children, you see! To think that in these days they can murder children!'

And as she spoke her gentle eyes grew terrible.

Mme. Germath had sounded the depths of horror. Those fearful scenes haunted her at night; she recoiled from them shuddering and with staring eyes. Noémi had been as her child; she had known her from her birth, and, her mother having been Charles' nurse, the two babies had laughed in the same cradle; but her grief was nothing beside the contempt and hatred which had been born in her. This quiet, good woman would herself have killed Prussians with delight. Killed them? She would have roasted them over a slow fire!

And this was the work of troops who had entered on the war determined, as their generals proclaimed, to respect and make respected everywhere they passed 'religion, humanity, civilisation.' What kind of man could Werder—their leader—be? Had he a wife, children, a mother? Was it possible, when he relentlessly pursued the glorious mission of burning a town with all its antiquities, its thought, its riches, its art, its science—and overwhelmed in their beds old men, women, and children? It only remained to him to kill Charles and André!

Her concentrated rage was such that it fired her to supreme

courage. She was stoical in the strength of her indignation, and, superb in her disdain, was the coolest and the most collected of them all.

A fearful explosion shook the window-panes and the floors. It seemed as if a shell had gone through the house.

'You must come downstairs instantly!' cried M. Germath on the staircase. 'Quick! everyone must come at once with his mattress on his head! Anselme, help me to carry out the captain!'

But the wounded man called out angrily from his room, 'Now don't be bothering about me! See to the women!'

He was sitting up with his injured leg stretched out stiffly in front of him; a stubbly beard bristled on his chin, and his melancholy, handsome eyes gleamed.

'Now, what did I tell you?' he said as Germath came in. 'We are going to have some fine work now that the dance is beginning! No, leave me here! I'll see it through!'

But Germath, André, and Ortrude forcibly removed him to the coach-house, which was built with thick walls under the terrace in the garden and covered with a considerable depth of earth.

Then Germath dragged the carriage outside the coach-house, and stuffed it full of empty sacks, and horse-cloths, so that it might form a protection on the side where the door was.

Meanwhile, Mme. Germath was dressing Charles. The child, half asleep, whimpered a little. All at once, fully awakened by a shrill whistling which seemed just to skim the house, he screamed, terrified, and called out, 'Noémi! Noémi!'

Mme. Getmath trembled. They had hidden the truth from him, but it was clear that he knew something.

'I want Noémi, mamma! I want her to come to me. I am frightened! They are going to hurt her again!'

'Why are you afraid, my dear?'

But the child, suddenly calm, said thoughtfully, 'No, I know Noémi can't come. She is in heaven with the angels. Hannah told me so.'

Mme. Germath wrapped him in an eiderdown, and ran along the lawn with him, beneath a shower of iron splinters. As she ran, a small bough of the chestnut tree snapped off and fell on her hair and crowned her with leaves. Gretchen and Hannah brought mattresses; they were both pale; Gretchen was laughing nervously, while Hannah's lips were compressed and the whites of her eyes seemed enlarged.

Charles did not cry any more. From his mother's arms—she was making him a little bed in a corner of the coach-house—he asked, 'Is Haffner with the Prussians?'

'Yes, dear.'

'And is Wilhelm ?'

He was very fond of the lieutenant's orderly. No one answered. Hannah, hearing her lover's name, turned away her eyes.

'Is it Haffner and Wilhelm who are firing on us?' pursued Charles.

aries.

'Go to sleep, dear; the firing won't hurt you.'

'It hurt Noémi, though. Is it true we shall never see her again? Tell me where she is?'

'She is where nobody suffers any more. Go to sleep, dear.'

And to think of Edel, Heinrich, and the honest face of that Haffner, whom at the moment she hated, almost broke Mme. Germath's heart.

M. Germath, feeling uneasy about Ortrude and Anselme, disappeared to look for them.

In the garden the air trembled; the sensation was of earthquake shocks continually repeated; before the blast of the storm all the birds in the old chestnut tree had taken flight: they were wheeling about, lost, in the purple night.

Then the watchmen's alarums broke forth afresh. 'Fire, at the Arsenal! Fire, at the Place Saint-Nicholas!'

M. Germath raised his arms to heaven—those strong arms which could so easily have killed a Prussian! Oh, how he would have killed and killed and killed! To be a man and not to be able to fight for oneself and one's household! To be one of thousands of citizens, imploring arms, ready to rush on the guns: and to wait—until Strasbourg was in ashes!

'But why do I linger here?' he asked himself roughly. 'I

must make myself useful; I must go and give help!'

He called Ortrude loudly. The old woman, spectacles on nose, calm in the midst of her orderly kitchen, had re-seated herself at the great wooden table, and was adding up her accounts in a little book. Germath felt angry with her. And Anselme? Deaf to calls, in the midst of his collection, he was flicking off the dust which had fallen from the roof on to his mosaics and boxes with a rag.

'Come, come, brother!' Germath reproached him, rousing him from a dream. 'What are you thinking about? This is a matter of life and death.'

And Anselme, like a child found out doing something naughty, stammered, 'You are quite right! Dust is a small matter compared to—It's merely habit! I will come down with you. Just

wait till I get my violin.'

He confided it to Gretchen with many directions, then admired Charles for a minute in his bed behind the harness-box; while Germath, stopping at his study, locked away his most valuable papers in the iron safe fixed into the wall. When André suggested going out with him, he said, 'No, stay with your mother and brother. There must be some man here.'

And, followed by Anselme, he pushed open the gate and disappeared into the shadows, under the flickering lights which shone on the glistening roofs and the falling chimneys.

Fire, at the Library! Fire, at the New Church! Fire, at the Law-courts! Fire, in the rue la Mésange, in the rue du Dôme, in the rue de la Nuée-Bleue!

Those cries Ansberque heard on the following night, with inexpressible agony, from the bastion in front of the ramparts, where he was on duty. In the rue de la Mésange were his house, his wife, and his daughter. Were they to perish thus? Compelled to stay where he was, he watched the increasing glare of the fires with anguished eyes and folded arms. What was yesterday night compared to this? The fearful thing was to be tied there to his post, beside the silent guns: to wait, inactive, behind the parapet, while the shells which came from all parts of the horizon rose above the fortress wall and fell into the city—into the city alone—incendiary shells and shrapnel alternately—bursting with methodical regularity, time after time in the same place.

Wohlfart, who was now enrolled as one of the free company of Liès-Bodard, felt the same helpless rage, as he clasped his useless rifle; and Gottus felt it too. On that evening of August 24, when the first shells fell, the pastor was about to read the story of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew to his three sons and their mother, sitting round the lamp-lit table, as was his custom on this anniversary, in order to teach them to hate religious fanaticism. He had had barely time to hurry them to the cellars; then he had helped to remove the wounded from the ambulance station hard by; while he was about it his parsonage and his school had caught fire.

Then, driven from the cellar for fear of suffocation, he, his wife and son, had been obliged to fly along a track which burnt the feet, and pursued by heat as from a furnace.

When they found refuge in the cellar of an hotel, they breathed

again; but Gottus' reflections were bitter.

'And this,' he said to himself, 'is the work of a religious and an educated people, who claim God as their Ally! What! God prompt such actions?—these, the fruits of Christianity? If such commands emanate from God, let us disavow Him at once; if this is Christianity the sooner we abjure it the better! No, these men know neither God nor the religion of Christ!'

And he blamed his own delusions and simplicity—those 'stray shells'—those 'unpreventable' accidents . . . . A young girl was brought down into the cellar presently who had her chest crushed: a stream of blood ran from her clothes and her shoes. They laid

her down-the crimson tide spreading all about her.

'Oh, God!' groaned the pastor, overcome by the sight of such suffering. 'God of Justice! canst Thou see this and permit it?'

The Germaths were the victims of events not less agonising. Neither Anselme nor M. Germath had returned; but the Stoumpffs, driven from their ruined house, had come to beg shelter, creeping along by the walls; the woman sobbing, a baby in her arms; the man livid, and one skirt of his coat scorched.

His first words were, 'We shall all die to-night! The Citadel and the Arsenal are both on fire, as well as the New Church and the Library! A magazine has been blown up! Everything is burning!'

André, who could bear no more, took advantage of the distraction, and slipped out of the open door into the street. Lise! Suppose anything had happened to her? The noise was deafening; all nature seemed overwhelmed; a display of fireworks—unheard of, incredible—filled the heavens. The shells, furrowing the sky, rose flaming above the houses, and fell in a stream of fire.

As he ran down the rue des Grandes-Arcades, stumbling over fallen stones, he heard ominous cracklings and roarings; the Temple-neuf was nothing but a vast crater. It was as light as noonday, and as hot as a foundry. Every man's face, lit by the horrible brightness, had a wild look—his every movement expressed intense anguish or complete despair. Some laughed, some cried. Nearly all, shaking their fists, invoked curses . . . .

There was not the slightest hope of saving the Library; the

jets of water from the hose, powerless against such a furnace, simply floated away in white steam. There was already a sort of black canopy in the air, formed of the ashes of books—the fine tinder of burning pages; sometimes a leaping flame pierced this cloud, and, in a gust of torrid air, it dissolved into particles like thousands of black butterflies. Thus was scattered to the four winds of heaven, as sterile dust and dead ashes, the wisdom and learning of centuries, the treasures of the past and the hopes of the future.

'Cowards! cowards!' shrieked a woman, as beautiful as a fury; and an old man groaned aloud that he should have lived so long to see such things as this.

Some shouted 'To arms! To arms! It's abominable!' And then other voices shrieked 'The Broglie is catching fire! They are shelling the Hôtel de Ville and the Cathedral! Good God, what a night! It must be the end of the world!'

But the most affecting to see were those whom agony and rage struck dumb. Among them were men of every social position rich, poor, middle-class, workmen—and not one who did not curse in his soul that Werder, already universally known as the Murderer or the Headsman, and his army of executioners.

Who was this new Omar, who burnt this second Library of Alexandria under the eyes of his outraged fellow-men and in the face of civilised Europe and the world?

Was this a war between Christian nations?

What had come to men when armies, instead of fighting armies, attacked the innocent population, and fired, not on fortifications, but on churches and on monuments—on monuments so splendid that the most savage ages had respected, and barbarism itself had spared them! From the Cathedral, which had survived all the great wars intact, the columns and statues were now falling, shivered to a thousand atoms. In 1678, though only one cannonball had struck the building, an inscription on the spot had proclaimed and denounced to succeeding generations that insult to the House of God. But the most wicked, the most scandalous and carefully premeditated crime of all, was the vast furnace, continually fed by shells, to which the Library had been reduced. Its roof dropped in amid a cataract of mighty subsidences, and the onlooker would scarcely have been surprised to see, in that quarry of fire, serpents and hydras struggling, and flaming beasts devouring each other beneath the deluge of black ashes.

Half distracted, André ran towards the Ansberques' house. All its windows were open, and the light which poured into them was so strong that the smallest objects were clearly defined. Though smoke poured from the first floor, the house itself was not actually on fire, but the one next to it, with its dry old beams, was burning like tinder.

Over the Ansberques' house brooded the abandonment of death. Where could Lise be? Had she gone? Had she been saved?

All of a sudden, agonised cries came from the ground floor, which was separated from the road by a little garden and a spiked gate which stood between two walls covered with bits of broken glass. Mme. Ansberque rushed out, bruised and dishevelled by a fall she had just had in escaping from the cellar, where she had hidden herself with Lise and Mum. In her excitement she had not been able to find the key, and was wounding her hands on the bars of the gate. She was followed by an old woman—a servant—whom André recognised, who was making all sorts of extraordinary signs and rocking herself to and fro. Some men came rushing up, and André, without the slightest astonishment—he hardly knew whether he was awake or dreaming—found himself next to his father, who was one of the first to arrive on the scene.

They tried to break down the gate, but it held fast.

Mme. Ansberque's face was disfigured with terror. 'Save us!' she screamed. 'Save my daughter! If you don't help her, she must perish!'

A workman brought a pickaxe; Germath inserted it between the bars, and, bringing his whole weight to bear on it, wrenched off the lock; while André, too desperate to wait, hoisted himself on someone's back and shoulders, and—not without cutting himself on the glass on the wall—let himself down into the garden. It was time—the fire was making headway. . . .

Mme. Ansberque recognised Germath and André, and in a sharp voice—the voice of acute nervous tension—called to them, 'A lamp has exploded in the cellar. Lise has fainted, and I am not strong enough to carry her out myself!'

Behind them, the servant went on making extraordinary grimaces and contortions: terror had turned her brain.

André rushed to the cellar stairs, followed by his father and the workman who had brought the pickaxe. Mme. Ansberque ran beside them crying, 'Good God! if she is dead!' . . . The cellar was full of smoke; the fallen lamp had gone out, but through a grating the ever-nearing fires lit up the darkness,

where a little black dog was howling pitifully.

André came up against a recumbent figure—felt the soft little hands and the delicate face—and crying, 'Lise! Lise!' raised her up. M. Germath took her head and the workman her feet, and, half choked, with their hearts beating to suffocation, carried her up the slippery stairs.

At the top, the crowd of helpers hailed them joyfully: the suspense had been so cruel, and the relief of knowing her safe was so great, that when they saw Lise coming to herself beneath her mother's tears and kisses, Mum's wild friskings and his capering for joy at finding himself free were received with applause and

laughter.

As for André, he was raised to the seventh heaven of bliss: the miracle he had prayed for had come to pass—Lise was saved—

and saved by him!

But a hasty retreat was necessary. The fire had spread to the Ansberques' house; all efforts to stop its progress with the axe had failed; the flames advanced, crackling and roaring, and the glare was so strong that it scorched the faces and blinded the eyes of the onlookers. André was too slow in getting out of the way and a plank fell on his head; a black darkness overwhelmed him, and he knew no more.

'Fire! at the Cathedral!'

When Strasbourg heard this cry—swelled by the watchmen on the top of the Cathedral itself—a shudder ran through the city. This staggered credulity and overstepped the bounds of possibility. That the Cathedral should burn, that God should be driven from His own House by man, and that the sacred vessels—the Bread of Life, which is His Body, and the Blood of Christ—should be sacrilegiously thrown to the flames, was worse than abominable and senseless; it was a staggering and an incredible profanation.

The Vandals themselves would not have done such a thing! On this third night of the great bombardment, the Strasbourgers, beside themselves, trembling with excitement and sleeplessness, rushed to try and save the great building whose flames lit the whole town.

Among them was Uncle Anselme, tossed like a fragment on the sea of the crowd. He had been passively drifting about for fortyut,

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eight hours; his hands were black, and his thumb injured, for, someone having bidden him take the place of a wounded fireman, he had obeyed, mechanically. He had given all the money he had on him to poor families who were without food or shelter; he had had nothing to eat or drink but a crust of bread and a glass of beer at Kermer's brasserie, which was protected from loft to cellar by great piles of sacks full of barley; here and there the grain ran out, and pigeons flew down from the roofs and pecked at it.

All through the morning Anselme had been wandering about the town, in a lull afforded by a new summons to surrender on the part of Werder. Everywhere, under the thick haze which veiled the sky, appeared the blackened shells of houses, the débris of shattered timbers, which were still hot—embers, that smothered with a black dust what had once been happy homes and household goods.

Now and again Anselme would stoop and carefully examine some unrecognisable fragment. Evil-looking people were scavenging among all this ruin, hoping to find money or jewellery. Uncle Anselme picked up a child's little sock, the toe of which had been burnt, and put it in his pocket.

On the Broglie, in front of the Hôtel de Ville, he was carried along by a crowd, whose ringleaders were shouting, 'No capitulation! Put the women and children in the vaults! To arms! March on the enemy!'

Three delegates and a few of the municipal council accompanied M. Humann, the Mayor, to interview General Uhrich. The Mayor, as the mouthpiece of the citizens, proposed to go in person to General Werder to implore him to spare the town. Uhrich negatived the suggestion, on the grounds that such a proceeding would imply that the military authorities were at one with the civil that the town was ready to surrender. As to giving out arms, what would be the use of that? The defence demanded neither more men nor the throwing away of soldiers' lives in sorties.

Uhrich added: 'When the bombardment was announced, I wrote and asked M. de Werder to let the women and children go out. This was his answer: "The weak point of the fortifications of strong places is the suffering of the inhabitants, who are exposed without protection to the bullets of the enemy, especially if, as in the case of Strasbourg, the city is without casemates. The departure you ask for would, then, increase the strength of the defence: for which reason, however painful the refusal may be to

myself, I cannot accede to your request, as, in the interests of humanity, I should wish to do."

This immovable hypocrisy, these lying words of sham

humanity, enraged all present.

Presently, Monseigneur Roess, the Bishop of Strasbourg, appeared to ask of General Uhrich a safe-conduct and an officer with a flag of truce to conduct him to the general headquarters of the enemy, where, in the name of religion, he proposed to adjure the Grand Duke of Baden to spare the town. Uhrich's reply was, 'Sir, I consent to your going in your priestly character to interview the enemy. Bid him concentrate his fire on our defenders and direct his attacks on our ramparts.'

But the Bishop had not been able to effect anything whatsoever, and had just come back in despair. The bombardment had thundered all day long; if it continued, even to a small extent, through this night—the most horrible night of all—Strasbourg, though surrounded by ramparts still intact, must infallibly be

reduced to ashes.

Anselme drew near to the Cathedral. Now the Library was gone, it seemed to him nothing was left to destroy; he had not thought, because he had not dared to think—because he could not bring himself to conceive—that they would also burn the Cathedral. However, he saw it done.

By that fearful light the whole city was illumined. Canals and river were red, and so were the clouds and the sky, upon which the huge pyramid was defined-not sharp and motionless, but quivering with passing shadows and reflections. Lights red as blood played on the black shells of the houses; the watchmen were seen to attack the fire from above, but the water of the pumps had not the slightest effect upon that white-hot whirlwind; and the massive roof flared away, despite the utmost efforts of the students from the School of Medicine, thousands of other willing arms, and fresh pumps and hose. Enormous flames-blue and green from the burning copper plates of the roof-rolled round the spire; the rafters fell in with a deafening roar, the copper plates were twisted, the windows were shivered into splinters, while shells still burst in that scorching abyss and threw up jets of fire. The façade-with its countless embellishments of bellturrets and arcading pillars, with its three doors surmounted by statues of crowned virgins, of wise and foolish virgins, of prophets and apostles-seemed to be endowed with a weird and

supernatural vitality, as if the very stone moved, and all these sombre figures had aroused themselves from their long sleep and returned to life in this hell.

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All at once fresh cries resounded. 'Fire! at the Town Hospital!' And, indeed, at the other end of the city the flames had reached the wounded and the dying. To the east, the citadel burnt fiercely; and to the west, between the Faubourg National and the Faubourg de Pierres, which were so completely ravaged that hardly one stone was left on another, yet one more conflagration shot up, enveloping the railway station and its long lines of carriages. Then shrieks came from one of the last remaining houses in the quarter—the shrieks of little children murdered in their beds—agonising shrieks that made the blood of those who heard them run cold, and feeble screams, that cried louder to Heaven than all the alarum bells and the sinister murmurs of Strasbourg, in its last agony, on fire from end to end.

(To be continued.)

## BETWEEN THE LINES.

'. . . to the right a violent artillery bombardment has been in progress.'—ACTUAL EXTRACT FROM OFFICIAL DESPATCH.

No. 2 Platoon of the Royal Blanks was cooking its breakfast with considerable difficulty and an astonishing amount of cheerfulness when the first shell fell in front of their firing trench. It had rained most of the night, as indeed it had rained most of the past week or the past month. All night long the men had stood on the firing step of the trench, chilled and miserable in their sodden clothing, and sunk in soft sticky mud over the ankles. All night long they had peeped over the parapet, or fired through the loopholes at the German trench a hundred yards off. And all night long they had been galled and stung by that 'desultory rifle fire' that the despatches mention so casually and so often, and that requires to be endured throughout a dragging day and night before its ugliness and unpleasantness can be realised.

No. 2 Platoon had two casualties for the night, a corporal who had paused too long in looking over the parapet while a star-shell flared, and 'caught it' neatly through the forehead, and a private who, in the act of firing through a loophole, had been hit by a bullet which glanced off his rifle barrel and completed its resulting ricochet in the private's eyes and head. There were other casualties further along the trench, but outside the immediate ken of No. 2 Platoon, until they were assisted or carried past on their way to the

ambulance.

Just after daybreak the desultory fire and the rain together had almost ceased, and No. 2 Platoon set about trying to coax cooking fires out of damp twigs and fragments of biscuit boxes which had been carefully treasured and protected in comparative dryness inside the men's jackets. The breakfast rations consisted of Army bread—heavy lumps of a doughy elasticity one would think only within the range of badness of a comic paper's 'Mrs. Newlywed'—flinthard biscuits, cheese, and tea.

'The only complaint against the rations bein' too much plum jam,' said a clay-smeared private, quoting from a much-derided 'Eye-witness' report as he dug out a solid streak of uncooked dough from the centre of his half-loaf and dropped it in the brazier. Then the first shell landed. It fell some yards outside the parapet, and a column of sooty black smoke shot up and hung heavily in the damp air. No. 2 Platoon treated it lightly.

'Good mornin',' said one man cheerfully, nodding towards the

black cloud. 'An' we 'ave not used Pears' soap.'

'Bless me if it ain't our old friend the Coal Box,' said another.
'We 'aven't met one of 'is sort for weeks back.'

'An' here's 'is pal Whistling Willie,' said a third, and they sat listening to the rise-and-fall whistling s-s-sh-s-s-sh of a high-angle gun's shell. As the whistle rose to a shriek, the group of men half made a move to duck, but they were too late, and the shell burst with a thunderous bang just short of the front parapet. Mud and lumps of earth splashed and rattled down into the trench, and

fragments of iron hurtled singing overhead.

The men cursed angrily. The brazier had been knocked over by a huge clod, half-boiling water was spilt, and, worst of all, the precious dry wood had fallen in the mud and water of the trench bottom. But the men soon had other things than a lost breakfast to think of. A shrapnel crashed overhead and a little to the right, and a sharp scream that died down into deep groans told of the first casualty. Another shell, and then another roared up and smashed into the soft ground behind the trench, hurting no one, but driving the whole line to crouch low in the narrow pit.

'Get down and lie close everyone,' shouted the young officer of No. 2 Platoon, but the 'crump-crump-crump' of another group of falling shells spoke sterner and more imperative orders than his. For half an hour the big shells fell with systematic and regular precision along the line of the front trench, behind it on the bare ground, and further back towards the supports' trench. The shooting was good, but so were the trenches—deep and narrow and steep-sided, with dug-outs scooped under the bank and strong traverses localising the effect of any shell that fell exactly on the trench. There were few casualties, and the Royal Blanks were beginning to congratulate themselves on getting off so lightly as the fire slackened and almost died away.

With the rest of the line No. 2 Platoon was painfully moving from its cramped position and trying to stamp and shake the circulation back into its stiffened limbs, when there came a sudden series of swishing rushes and sharp vicious cracks overhead, and ripping thuds of shrapnel across and across the trench. The burst of fire from the light guns was excellently timed. Their high velocity and

flat trajectory landed the shells on their mark without any of the whistling rush of approach that marked the bigger shells and gave time to duck into any available cover. The one gust of light shells caught a full dozen men—as many as the half-hour's work of the

big guns.

Then the heavies opened again as accurately as before and twice as fast. The trench began to yawn in wide holes, and its sides to crumble and collapse. No. 2 Platoon occupied a portion of the trench that ran out in a blunted angle, and it caught the worst of the fire. One shell falling just short of the front parapet dug a vawning hole and drove in the forward wall of the trench in a tumbled slide of mud and earth. A dug-out and the two men occupying it were completely buried, and the young officer scurried and pushed along to the place shouting for spades. A party fell to work with frantic haste; but all their energy was wasted. The occupants of the buried dug-out were dead when at last the spades found them . . . and broken finger-nails and bleeding finger-tips told a grisly tale of the last desperate struggle for escape and for the breath of life. The officer covered the one convulsed face and starting eyes with his handkerchief, and a private placed a muddy cap over the other.

'Get back to your places and get down,' said the officer quietly, and the men crawled back and crouched low again. For a full hour the line lay under the flail of the big shells that roared and shrieked overhead and thundered crashing along the trenches. For a full hour the men barely moved, except to shift along from a spot where the shaken and crumbling parapet gave insufficient cover from the hailing shrapnel that poured down at intervals, and from the bullets that swept in and smacked venomously into the back of

the trench through the shell-rifts in the parapet.

A senior officer made his way slowly along the sodden and quaking trench. He halted beside the young officer and spoke to him a few minutes, asking what the casualties were and hoping vaguely 'they would ease off presently.'

'Can't our own guns do anything?' asked the youngster; 'or

won't they let us get out and have a go at them?'

The senior nodded towards the bare stretch of muddy plough before their trench, and the tangle of barbed wire beyond.

'How many men d'you suppose would get there?' he asked.
'Some would,' said the youngster eagerly, 'and anything would be better than sticking here and getting pounded to pieces.'

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'We'll see,' said the major moving off. 'They may ask us to try it presently. And if not we'll pull through, I daresay. See that the men keep down, and keep down yourself, Grant. Watch out for a rush through. This may be a preparation for something of the sort.'

He moved along, and the lad flattened himself again against the side of the wet trench.

A word from a man near him turned him round. '...a 'tillery observin' officer comin'. P'raps our guns are goin' for 'em at last.'

The gunner officer stumbled along the trench towards them. Behind him came his signaller, a coil of wire and a portable telephone in a leather case slung over his shoulder. No. 2 Platoon watched their approach with eager anticipation, and strained ears and attention to catch the conversation that passed between their officer and the artilleryman. And a thrill of disappointment pulsed down the line at the gunner's answer to the first question put to him. 'No,' he said, 'I have orders not to fire unless they come out of the trenches to attack. We'll give 'em gyp if they try it. My guns are laid on their front trench and I can sweep the whole of this front with shrapnel.'

'But why not shut up their guns and put a stop to this?' asked the officer, and his platoon fervently echoed the question in their hearts.

'Not my pidgin,' said the gunner, cautiously peering through the field-glasses he levelled through a convenient loophole. 'That's the Heavies' job. I'm Field, and my guns are too light to say much to these fellows. Look out!' and he stooped low in the trench as the rising rush of sound told of a shell coming down near them.

'That's about an eight-inch,' he said after the shell had fallen with a crash behind them, a spout of earth and mud leaping up and spattering down over them and fragments singing and whizzing overhead. 'Just tap in on the wire, Jackson, and raise the Battery.'

The telephonist opened his case and lifted out his instrument, groped along the trench wall a few yards and found his wire, joined up to his instrument, dashed off a series of dots and dashes on the 'buzzer,' and spoke into his mouthpiece. No. 2 Platoon watched in fascinated silence and again gave all their attention to listening as the Artillery officer took the receiver.

. . . That you, Major? . . . Yes, this is Arbuthnot. . . . In

the forward firing trench. . . . Yes, pretty lively . . . big stuff they're flinging mostly, and some twelve-pounder shrapnel. . . . No, no signs of a move in their trenches. . . . All right, sir, I'll take care. I can't see very well from here so I'm going to move along a bit. . . . Very well, sir, I'll tap in again higher up. . . . Good-bye.' He handed back the instrument to the telephonist. 'Pack up again,' he said, 'and come along.'

When he had gone No. 2 Platoon turned eagerly on the telephonist, and he ran a gauntlet of anxious questions as he followed the Forward officer. Nine out of ten of the questions were to the same purpose, and the gunner answered them with some sharpness. He turned angrily at last on one man who put the query in broad Scots accent.

'No,' he said tartly, 'we ain't tryin' to silence their guns. An' if you partickler wants to know why we ain't—well, p'raps them Glasgow townies o' yours can tell you.'

He went on and No. 2 Platoon sank to grim silence. The meaning of the gunner's words were plain enough to all, for had not the papers spoken for weeks back of the Clyde strikes and the shortage of munitions? And the thoughts of all were pithily put in the one sentence by a private of No. 2 Platoon.

'I'd stop cheerful in this blanky 'ell for a week,' he said slowly, 'if so be I 'ad them strikers 'ere alongside me gettin' the same dose.'

All this time there had been a constant although not a heavy rifle fire on the trenches. It had not done much damage, because the Royal Blanks were exposing themselves as little as possible and keeping low down in their narrow trenches. But now the German rifles began to speak faster, and the fire rose to a dull roar. The machine-guns joined in, their sharp rat-tat-tat sounding hard and distinct above the rifles. As the volume of rifle fire increased, so, for a minute, did the shell fire, until the whole line of the Royal Blanks' trenches was vibrating to the crash of the shells and humming with rifle bullets which whizzed overhead or smacked with loud whip-crack reports into the parapet.

The officer of No. 2 Platoon hitched himself higher on the parapet and hoisted a periscope over it. Almost instantly a bullet struck it, shattering the glass to fragments. He lowered it and hastily fitted a new glass, pausing every few moments to bob his head up over the parapet and glance hastily across at the German trench. A second time he raised his instrument to position and in less than a minute it was shot away for a second time.

The Artillery officer came hurrying and stumbling back along the trench, his telephonist labouring behind him. They stopped at the place where they had tapped in before and the telephonist busied himself connecting up his instrument. The Artillery officer flung himself down beside the Platoon commander. 'My confounded wire cut again,' he panted, 'just when I want it too. Sounds as if they meant a rush, eh?' The infantryman nodded. 'Will they stop shelling before they rush?' he shouted.

'Not till their men are well out in front. Their guns can keep going over their heads for a bit. Are you through, Jackson? Tell

the Battery to "eyes front." It looks like an attack.'

The telephonist repeated the message, listened a moment and commenced, 'The Major says, sir- 'when his officer interrupted sharply, 'Three rounds gun-fire-quick.'

'Three rounds gun-fire—quick, sir,' bellowed the telephonist

into his mouthpiece.

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'Here they come, lads. Let 'em have it,' yelled the Platoon commander, and commenced himself to fire through a loophole.

At the same moment there came from the rear the quick thudding reports of the British guns, the rush of their shells overhead, and the sharp crash of their shells over the German parapets.

'All fired, sir,' called the telephonist.

'Battery fire one second,' the Observing Officer shouted without

turning his head from his watch over the parapet.

'Number one fired-two fired-three fired,' the signaller called rapidly, and the observing officer watched narrowly the white cotton-wool clouds of the bursting shrapnel of his guns.

'Number three, ten minutes more right—all guns, drop twentyfive-repeat,' he ordered, and in swift obedience the guns began to drop their shrapnel showers, sweeping along the ground in front of the German trench.

But the expected rush of Germans hung fire. A line of bobbing heads and shoulders had showed above their parapet and only a

few scattered groups had clambered over its top.

'They're beat,' shouted the infantry officer, exultingly. 'They're dodging back. Give it to 'em, boys-give it-ow!' He broke off and ducked down with a hand clapped to his cheek where a bullet had scored its way.

'Get down! get down! Make your men get down,' said the

gunner officer rapidly. 'It's all . . .'

Again there came the swishing rush of the light shells, a series

of quick-following bangs, and a hail of shrapnel tearing across the trench, before the men had time to duck.

'All a false alarm—just a dodge to get your men's heads up within reach of their Fizz-Bangs' shrapnel,' said the artilleryman, and called to the signaller. 'All guns raise twenty-five. Section fire five seconds. . . . Hullo—hit?' he continued to the Platoon officer, as he noticed him wiping a smear of blood from his cheek.

'Just a nice little scratch,' said the lad, grinning. 'Enough to let me swank about being wounded and show off a pretty scar to

my best girl when the war's over.'

'Afraid that last shrapnel burst gave some of your fellows more'n a pretty scar,' said the gunner. 'But I suppose I'd better slow my guns up again. . . . Jackson, tell them the attack's evidently stopped—section fire ten seconds.'

'Can't you keep on belting 'em for a bit?' asked the Platoon

officer. 'Might make 'em ease up on us.'

The gunner shook his head regretfully.

'I'd ask nothing better,' he said. 'I could just give those trenches beans. But our orders are strict, and we daren't waste a round on anything but an attack. I'll bet that's my Major wanting to know if he can't slack off a bit more,' he continued, as the signaller called something about 'Wanted to speak here, sir.'

He went to the instrument and held a short conversation. 'Told you so,' he said, when he returned to the infantry officer.

'No attack-no shells. We're stopping again.'

'Doesn't seem to be much stop about the Germs,' grumbled the infantryman, as another series of cracking shells shook the ground close behind them. He moved down the line speaking a few words here and there to the crouching men of his platoon.

'This is getting serious,' he said when he came back to his place.
'There's more than the half of my lot hit, and the most of them pretty badly. These shrapnel bullets and shell splinters make a shocking mess of a wound, y' know.'

'Yes,' said the gunner grimly, 'I know.'

'A perfectly brutal mess,' the subaltern repeated. 'A bullet now is more or less decent, but those shells of theirs, they don't give a man a chance to pull through.'

'Ours are as bad, if that's any satisfaction to you,' said the

gunner.

'I s'pose so,' agreed the subaltern. 'Ghastly sort of game altogether, isn't it? Those poor fellows of mine now—the killed,

I mean. Think of their fathers and mothers and wives or sweethearts---

'I'd rather not,' said the gunner. 'And I shouldn't advise you

to. Better not to think of these things.'

'I wish they'd come again,' said the Platoon commander.

'It would stop the shells for a bit perhaps. They're getting on my nerves. One's so helpless against them, sticking here waiting to know where the next will drop. And they don't even give a fellow the ordinary four to one chance of a casualty being a wound only.

They make such a cruel messy smash of a fellow. . . . Are you going?'

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'Must find that break in my wire,' said the gunner, and presently he and the telephonist ploughed off along the trench.

The bombardment continued with varying intensity throughout the day. There was no grand finale, no spectacular rush or charge, no crashing assault, no heroic hand-to-hand combats—no anything but the long-drawn agony of lying still and being hammered by the crashing shells. This was no 'artillery preparation for the assault,' although the Royal Blanks did not know that and so dare not stir from the danger zone of the forward trench. They were not even to have the satisfaction of giving back some of the punishment they had endured, or the glory—a glory carefully concealed from their friends at home, and mostly lost by the disguising or veiling

of their identity in the newspapers, but still a glory—of taking a trench or making a successful attack or counter-attack. It was

merely another 'heavy artillery bombardment,' lived through and endured all unknown, as so many have been endured.

The Royal Blanks were relieved at nightfall when the fire had

died down. The Artillery Observing Officer was just outside the communication trench at the relief hour and saw the casualties being helped or carried out. A stretcher passed and the figure on it had a muddy and dark-stained blanket spread over, and an

officer's cap and binoculars on top.

'An officer?' asked the gunner. 'Who is it?'

'Mr. Grant, sir,' said one of the stretcher-bearers dully. 'No. 2 Platoon.'

The gunner noted the empty sag of the blanket where the head and shoulders should have been outlined and checked the halfformed question of 'Badly hit?' to 'How was it?'

'Shell, sir. A Fizz-Bang hit the parapet just where 'e was

lyin'. Caught 'im fair.'

The bearers moved on, leaving the gunner groping in his memory for a sentence in the youngster's last talk he had heard. 'Ghastly business . . . cruel messy smash.'

'Beg pardon, sir?' said the telephonist.

The Forward Officer made no answer but continued to stare after the disappearing stretcher-bearers. The signaller shuffled his feet in the mud and hitched up the strap of the instrument on his shoulder.

'I suppose it's all over now, sir,' he said.

'Yes, all over—except for his father, or mother, or sweetheart,' said the officer absently.

The signaller stared. 'I meant the shellin', sir.'

'Oh—ah, yes; the shelling, Jackson. Yes, I daresay that's over for to-night, since they seem to have stopped now.'

'P'raps we might see about some food, sir,' said the signaller.

'Food—to be sure,' said the officer briskly. 'Eat, drink, and be merry, Jackson, for—I'm hungry too, now I think of it. And, oh Lord, I'm tired.'

No. 2 Platoon were tired too, as they filed wearily out by the communication trench, tired and worn out mentally and physically—and yet not too tired or too broken for a light word or a jest. From the darkness behind them a German flare soared up and burst, throwing up bushes and shattered buildings, sandbag parapets, broken tree-stumps, sticks and stones in luminous-edged silhouette. A machine-gun burst into a stutter of fire, the reports sounding faint at first and louder and louder as the muzzle swept round in its arc. 'Ssh-sh-sh,' the bullets swept overhead, and No. 2 Platoon halted and crouched low in the shallow communication trench.

'Oh, shut it, blast ye,' growled one of the men disgustedly. 'Ain't we 'ad enough for one day?'

'It's only 'im singin' 'is little evenin' hymn as usual,' said another.

'Just sayin' 'is good-bye an' sendin' a few partin' sooveniers; 'and another sang 'Say aw rev-wore, but not good-bye.'

'Stop that howling there,' a sergeant called down the line, and stop smoking those cigarettes and talking.'

'Certainly, sergeant,' a voice came back. 'An' please, sergeant, will you allow us to keep on breathin'?'

The light died, and the line rose and moved on, squelching softly in the mud. A man clapped a hand to his pocket, half halted and exclaimed in annoyance. 'Blest if I 'aven't left my mouth-organ back there,' he said. 'Hutt!' said his next file. 'Be glad ye've a mouth left, or a head to have a mouth. It might be worse, an' ye might be left back there yerself decoratin' about ten square yards of trench.'

'Tut-tut-tut' went the maxim behind them again.

'Tutt-tutt yourself, you stammer-an'-spit blighter,' said the disconsolate mouth-organ loser, and 'D'you think we can chance a smoke yet?' as the platoon moved out on the road and behind the shelter of some ruined house-walls.

Platoon by platoon the company filed out and formed up roughly behind the houses. The order to move came at last and the ranked fours swung off, tramping slowly and stolidly in silence until someone struck up a song—

'Crump, crump, crump says the big bustin' shells---'

A chorus of protest and a 'Give the shells a rest' stopped the song on the first line, and it was to the old regimental tune, the canteen and sing-song favourite, 'The Sergeant's Return,' that the Royal Blanks settled itself into its pack shoulder-straps and tramped on.

'I'm the same ol' feller that you always used to know-

Oh! Oh! you know you used to know—

An' it's years since we parted way down on Plymouth Hoe— Oh! Oh! So many years ago.

I've roamed around the world, but I've come back to you,

For my 'eart 'as never altered, my 'eart is ever true.

(Prolonged and noisy imitation of a kiss.)

Ain't that got the taste you always used to know?'

The colonel was talking to the adjutant in the road as the companies moved past, and he noted with some concern the ragged ranks and listless movement of the first lot to pass.

'They're looking badly tucked up,' he said.

'They've had a cruel day,' said the adjutant.

'Yes, the worst kind,' agreed the O.C. 'And I doubt if they can stand that sort of thing so well now. The old regiment is not what it used to be. We're so filled up with recruits now—youngsters too. . . . Here's B company—about the rawest of the lot and caught the worst of it to-day. How d'you think they stand it?'

But it was B company that answered the question for itself

and the old regiment, singing the answer softly to itself and the O.C. as it trudged past—

'I'm the same ol' feller that you always used to know— Oh! Oh! you know you used to know. . . .'

'Gad, Malcolm,' said the O.C. straightening his own shoulders, 'they'll do, they'll do.'

'... My 'eart 'as never altered, my 'eart is ever true,' the remnant of No. 2 Platoon sang past him.

'They haven't shaken us yet,' said the O.C. proudly.

'Tutt, tutt!' grumbled the maxim faintly. 'Tutt, tutt!'
BOYD CABLE.

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## BY MARY ROBERTS RINEHART,1

## CHAPTER XII.

#### THE COST OF PEACE.

TILLIE was gone.

Oddly enough, the last person to see her before she left was Harriet Kennedy. On the third day after Mr. Schwitter's visit, Harriet's coloured maid had announced a visitor.

Harriet's business instinct had been good. She had taken expensive rooms in a good location, and furnished them with the assistance of a decorator. Then she arranged with a New York house to sell her models on commission.

Her short excursion to New York had marked for Harriet the beginning of a new heaven and a new earth. Here, at last, she found people speaking her own language. She ventured a suggestion to a manufacturer, and found it greeted, not, after the manner of the Street, with scorn, but with approval and some surprise.

'About once in ten years,' said Mr. Arthurs, 'we have a woman from out of town bring us a suggestion that is both novel and practical. When we find people like that, we watch them. They climb, madam—climb.'

Harriet's climbing was not so rapid as to make her dizzy; but business was coming. The first time she made a price of seventyfive dollars for an evening gown, she went out immediately after and took a drink of water. Her throat was parched.

She began to learn little quips of the feminine mind: that a woman who can pay seventy-five will pay double that sum; that it is not considered good form to show surprise at a dressmaker's prices, no matter how high they may be; that long mirrors and artificial lights help sales—no woman over thirty but was grateful for her pink-and-grey room with its soft lights. And Harriet herself conformed to the picture. She took a lesson from the New York modistes, and wore trailing black gowns. She strapped her thin figure into the best corset she could get, and had her black

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America by Mary Roberts Rinehars.

hair marcelled and dressed high. And, because she was a lady by birth and instinct, the result was not incongruous, but refined and rather impressive.

She took her business home with her at night, lay awake scheming, and awakened at dawn to find fresh colour combinations in the early sky. She wakened early because she kept her head tied up in a towel, so that her hair need be done only three times a week. That and the corset were the penalties she paid. Her high-heeled shoes were a torment, too; but in the work-room she kicked them off.

To this new Harriet, then, came Tillie in her distress. Tillie was rather overwhelmed at first. The Street had always considered Harriet 'proud.' But Tillie's urgency was great, her methods direct.

'Why, Tillie!' said Harriet.

'Yes'm.'

'Will you sit down?'

Tillie sat. She was not daunted now. While she worked at the fingers of her silk gloves, what Harriet took for nervousness was pure abstraction.

'It's very nice of you to come to see me. Do you like my rooms?'

Tillie surveyed the rooms, and Harriet caught her first full view of her face.

'Is there anything wrong? Have you left Mrs. McKee?'

'I think so. I came to talk to you about it.'

It was Harriet's turn to be overwhelmed.

'She's very fond of you. If you have had any words---'

'It's not that. I'm just leaving. I'd like to talk to you, if you don't mind.'

'Certainly.'

Tillie hitched her chair closer.

'I'm up against something, and I can't seem to make up my mind. Last night I said to myself, "I've got to talk to some woman who's not married, like me, and not as young as she used to be. There's no use going to Mrs. McKee: she's a widow, and wouldn't understand."'

Harriet's voice was a trifle sharp as she replied. She never lied about her age, but she preferred to forget it.

'I wish you'd tell me what you're getting at.'

'It ain't the sort of thing to come to too sudden. But it's

like this. You and I can pretend all we like, Miss Harriet; but we're not getting all out of life that the Lord meant us to have. You've got them wax figures instead of children, and I have mealers.'

A little spot of colour came into Harriet's cheek. But she was interested. Regardless of the corset, she bent forward.

'Maybe that's true. Go on.'

'I'm almost forty. Ten years more at the most, and I'm through. I'm slowing up. Can't get around the tables as I used to. Why, yesterday I put sugar into Mr. Le Moyne's coffee—well, never mind about that. Now I've got a chance to get a home, with a good man to look after me—I like him pretty well, and he thinks a lot of me.'

'Mercy sake, Tillie! You are going to get married?'

'No'm, 'said Tillie; 'that's it,' and sat silent for a moment.

The grey curtains, with their pink cording, swung gently in the open windows. From the work-room came the distant hum of a sewing-machine and the sound of voices. Harriet sat with her hands in her lap and listened while Tillie poured out her story. The gates were down now. She told it all, consistently and with unconscious pathos: her little room under the roof at Mrs. McKee's, and the house in the country; her loneliness, and the loneliness of the man; even the faint stirrings of potential motherhood, her empty arms, her advancing age—all this she knit into the fabric of her story and laid at Harriet's feet, as the ancients put their questions to their gods.

Harriet was deeply moved. Too much that Tillie poured out to her found an echo in her own breast. What was this thing she was striving for but a substitute for the real things of life—love and tenderness, children, a home of her own? Quite suddenly she loathed the grey carpet on the floor, the pink chairs, the shaded lamps. Tillie was no longer the waitress at a cheap boarding-house. She loomed large, potential, courageous, a woman who

held life in her hands.

'Why don't you go to Mrs. Rosenfeld? She's your aunt, isn't she?'

'She thinks any woman's a fool to take up with a man.'

'You're giving me a terrible responsibility, Tillie, if you're

asking my advice.'

'No'm. I'm asking what you'd do if it happened to you. Suppose you had no people that cared anything about you, nobody to disgrace, and all your life nobody had really cared

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anything about you. And then a chance like this came along. What would you do?'

'I don't know,' said poor Harriet. 'It seems to me—I'm afraid I'd be tempted. It does seem as if a woman had the right

to be happy, even if---'

Her own words frightened her. It was as if some hidden self, and not she, had spoken. She hastened to point out the other side of the matter, the insecurity of it, the disgrace. Like K., she insisted that no right can be built out of a wrong. Tillie sat and smoothed her gloves. At last, when Harriet paused in sheer panic, the girl rose.

'I know how you feel, and I don't want you to take the responsibility of advising me,' she said quietly. 'I guess my mind was made up anyhow. But before I did it I just wanted to be sure that a decent woman would think the way I do about it.'

And so, for a time, Tillie went out of the life of the Street as she went out of Harriet's handsome rooms, quietly, unobtrusively,

with calm purpose in her eyes.

There were other changes in the Street. The Lorenz house was being painted for Christine's wedding. Johnny Rosenfeld, not perhaps of the Street itself, but certainly pertaining to it, was learning to drive Palmer Howe's new car, in mingled agony and bliss. He walked along the Street, not 'right foot, left foot,' but 'brake foot, clutch foot,' and took to calling off the vintage of passing cars. 'So-and-So 1910,' he would say, with 'contempt in his voice. He spent more than he could afford on a large streamer meant to be fastened across the rear of the motor, which said, 'Excuse our dust,' and was inconsolable when Palmer refused to let him use it.

K. had yielded to Anna's insistence, and was boarding as well as rooming at the Page house. The Street, rather snobbish to its occasional floating population, was accepting and liking him. It found him tender, infinitely human. And in return he found that this seemingly empty eddy into which he had drifted was teeming with life. He busied himself with small things, and found his outlook gradually less tinged with despair. When he found himself inclined to rail, he organised a baseball club, and sent down to everlasting defeat the Linburgs, consisting of cash-boys from Linden and Hofburg's department store.

The Rosenfelds adored him with the single exception of the head of the family. The elder Rosenfeld having been 'sent up,' ' K.' 127

it was K. who discovered that by having him consigned to the workhouse his family would receive from the county some sixty-five cents a day for his labour. As this was exactly sixty-five cents a day more than he was worth to them free, Mrs. Rosenfeld voiced the pious hope that he be kept there for ever.

K. made no further attempt to avoid Max Wilson. Some day they would meet face to face. He hoped, when it happened, they two might be alone; that was all. Even had he not been bound by his promise to Sidney, flight would have been foolish. The world was a small place, and, one way and another, he had known many people. Wherever he went, there would be the same chance.

And he did not deceive himself. Other things being equal the eddy and all that it meant—he would not willingly take himself out of his small share of Sidney's life.

She was never to know what she meant to him, of course. He had scourged his heart until it no longer shone in his eyes when he looked at her. But he was very human—not at all meek. There were plenty of days when his philosophy lay in the dust and savage dogs of jealousy tore at it; more than one evening when he threw himself face downward on the bed and lay without moving for hours. And of these periods of despair he was always heartily ashamed the next day.

The meeting with Max Wilson took place early in September, and under better circumstances than he could have hoped for.

Sidney had come home for her weekly visit, and her mother's condition had alarmed her for the first time. When Le Moyne came home at six o'clock, he found her waiting for him in the hall.

'I am just a little frightened, K.,' she said. 'Do you think mother is looking quite well?'

'She has felt the heat, of course. The summer-'

'Her lips are blue!'

'It's probably nothing serious.'

'She says you've had Dr. Ed over to see her.'

She put her hands on his arm and looked up at him with appeal and something of terror in her face.

Thus cornered, he had to acknowledge that Anna had been out of sorts.

'I shall come home, of course. It's tragic and absurd that I should be caring for other people, when my own mother——'

She dropped her head on his arms, and he saw that she was

crying. If he made a gesture to draw her to him, she never knew it. After a moment she looked up.

'I'm much braver than this in the hospital. But when it's one's own!'

K. was sorely tempted to tell her the truth and bring her back to the little house: to their old evenings together, to seeing the younger Wilson, not as the white god of the operating-room and the hospital, but as the dandy of the Street and the neighbour of her childhood—back even to Joe.

But, with Anna's precarious health and Harriet's increasing engrossment in her business, he felt it more and more necessary that Sidney go on with her training. A profession was a safeguard. And there was another point: it had been decided that Anna was not to know her condition. If she were not worried she might live for years. There was no surer way to make her suspect it than by bringing Sidney home.

Sidney sent Katie to ask Dr. Ed to come over after dinner. With the sunset Anna seemed better. She insisted on coming downstairs, and even sat with them on the balcony until the stars came out, talking of Christine's trousseau, and, rather fretfully,

of what she would do without the parlours.

'You shall have your own boudoir upstairs,' said Sidney valiantly. 'Katie can carry your tray up there. We are going to make the sewing-room into your private sitting-room, and I shall nail the machine-top down.'

This pleased her. When K. insisted on carrying her upstairs,

she went in a flutter.

'He is so strong, Sidney!' she said, when he had placed her on her bed. 'How can a clerk, bending over a ledger, be so muscular? When I have callers, will it be all right for Katie to show them upstairs?'

She dropped asleep before the Doctor came; and when, at something after eight, the door of the Wilson house slammed and a figure

crossed the Street, it was not Ed at all, but the surgeon.

Sidney had been talking rather more frankly than usual. Lately there had been a reserve about her. K., listening intently that night, read between words a story of small persecutions and jealousies. But the girl minimised them, after her way.

'It's always hard for probationers,' she said. 'I often think

Miss Harrison is trying my mettle.'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Harrison!'

' K.' 129

'Carlotta Harrison. And now that Miss Gregg has said she will accept me it's really all over. The other nurses are wonderful—so kind and so helpful. I hope I shall look well in my cap.'

Carlotta Harrison was in Sidney's hospital! A thousand contingencies flashed through his mind. Sidney might grow to like her and bring her to the house. Sidney might insist on the thing she always spoke of—that he visit the hospital; and he would meet her, face to face. He could have depended on a man to keep his secret. This girl, with her sombre eyes and her threat to pay him out for what had happened to her—she meant danger of a sort that no man could fight.

'Soon,' said Sidney, through the warm darkness, 'I shall have a cap, and be always forgetting it and putting my hat on over it the new ones always do. One of the girls slept in hers the other night! They are tulle, you know, and quite stiff, and it was the

most erratic-looking thing the next day!'

It was then that the door across the Street closed. Sidney did not hear it, but K. bent forward. There was a part of his brain

always automatically on watch.

'I shall get my operating-room training, too,' she went on. 'That is the real romance of the hospital. A—a surgeon is a sort of hero in a hospital. You wouldn't think that, would you? There was a lot of excitement to-day. Even the probationers' table was talking about it. Dr. Max Wilson did the Edwardes operation.'

The figure across the Street was lighting a cigarette. Perhaps,

after all-

'Something tremendously difficult—I don't know what. It's going into the medical journals. A Dr. Edwardes invented it, or whatever they call it. They took a picture of the operating-room for the article. The photographer had to put on operating clothes and wrap the camera in sterilised towels. It was the most thrilling thing, they say——'

Her voice died away as her eyes followed K.'s. Max, cigarette in hand, was coming across, under the ailanthus tree. He hesitated

on the pavement, his eyes searching the shadowy balcony.

'Sidney?'

'Here! Right back here!'

There was vibrant gladness in her tone. He came slowly towards them.

'My brother is not at home, so I came over. How select you are, with your balcony!'

'Can you see the step?'

'Coming, with bells on.'

K. had risen and pushed back his chair. His mind was working quickly. Here in the darkness he could hold the situation for a moment. If he could get Sidney into the house, the rest would not matter. Luckily, the balcony was very dark.

'Is any one ill ?'

'Mother is not well. This is Mr. Le Moyne, and he knows who you are very well indeed.'

The two men shook hands.

'I've heard a lot of Mr. Le Moyne. Didn't the Street beat the Linburgs the other day ? And I believe the Rosenfelds are in receipt of sixty-five cents a day and considerable peace and quiet through you, Mr. Le Moyne. You're the most popular man on the Street.'

'I've always heard that about you. Sidney, if Dr. Wilson is here to see your mother——.'

'Going,' said Sidney. 'And Dr. Wilson is a very great person, K., so be polite to him.'

Max had roused at the sound of Le Moyne's voice, not to suspicion, of course, but to memory. Without any apparent reason, he was back in Berlin, tramping the country roads, and beside him——

'Wonderful night!'

'Great,' he replied. 'The mind's a curious thing, isn't it? In the instant since Miss Page went through that window I've been to Berlin and back! Will you have a cigarette?'

'Thanks; I have my pipe here.'

K. struck a match with his steady hands. Now that the thing had come, he was glad to face it. In the flare, his quiet profile glowed against the night. Then he flung the match over the rail.

'Perhaps my voice took you back to Berlin.'

Max stared; then he rose. Blackness had descended on them again, except for the dull glow of K.'s old pipe.

'For God's sake!'

'Sh! The neighbours next door have a bad habit of sitting just inside the curtains.'

'But-you!'

'Sit down. Sidney will be back in a moment. I'll talk to you, if you'll sit still. Can you hear me plainly?'

After a moment-' Yes.'

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'I've been here—in the city, I mean—for a year. Name's Le Moyne. Don't forget it—Le Moyne. I've got a position in the gas office, clerical. I get fifteen dollars a week. I have reason to think I'm going to be moved up. That will be twenty, maybe twenty-two.'

Wilson stirred, but he found no adequate words. Only a part of what K. said got to him. For a moment he was back in a famous clinic, and this man across from him—it was not believable.

'It's not hard work, and it's safe. If I make a mistake there's no life hanging on it. Once I made a blunder, a month or two ago. It was a big one. It cost me three dollars out of my own pocket. But—that's all it cost.'

Wilson's voice showed that he was more than incredulous; he was profoundly moved.

'We thought you were dead. There were all sorts of stories. When a year went by—the *Titanic* had gone down, and nobody knew but what you were on it—we gave up. I—in June we put up a tablet for you at the college. I went down for the—for the services.'

'Let it stay,' said K. quietly. 'I'm dead as far as the college goes, anyhow. I'll never go back. I'm Le Moyne now. And, for heaven's sake, don't be sorry for me. I'm more contented than I've been for a long time.'

The wonder in Wilson's voice was giving way to irritation.

'But—when you had everything! Why, good heavens, man, I did your operation to-day, and I've been blowing about it ever since.'

'I had everything for a while. Then I lost the essential. When that happened I gave up. All a man in our profession has is a certain method, knowledge—call it what you like—and faith in himself. I lost my self-confidence; that's all. Certain things happened; kept on happening. So I gave it up. That's all. It's not dramatic. For about a year I was damned sorry for myself. I've stopped whining now.'

'If every surgeon gave up because he lost cases—I've just told you I did your operation to-day. There was just a chance for the man, and I took my courage in my hands and tried it. The poor devil's dead.'

K. rose rather wearily and emptied his pipe over the balcony rail.
'That's not the same. That's the chance he and you took.

What happened to me was-different.'

Pipe in hand, he stood staring out at the ailanthus tree with its crown of stars. Instead of the Street with its quiet houses, he saw the men he had known and worked with and taught, his friends who spoke his language, who had loved him, many of them, gathered about a bronze tablet set in a wall of the old college; he saw their earnest faces and grave eyes. He heard——

He heard the soft rustle of Sidney's dress as she came into the

little room behind them.

# CHAPTER XIII.

#### DAY OF DAYS.

A FEW days after Wilson's recognition of K., two most exciting things happened to Sidney. One was that Christine asked her to be chief bridesmaid at her wedding. The other was more wonderful. She was accepted, and given her cap.

Because she could not get home that night, and because the little house had no telephone, she wrote the news to her mother

and sent a note to Le Moyne:

'DEAR K.,—I am accepted, and it is on my head at this minute. I am as conscious of it as if it were a halo, and as if I had done something to deserve it, instead of just hoping that some day I shall. I am writing this on the bureau, so that when I lift my eyes I may see It. I am afraid just now I am thinking more of the cap than of what it means. It is becoming!

'Very soon I shall slip down and show it to the ward. I have promised. I shall go to the door when the night nurse is busy somewhere, and turn all around and let them see it, without saying

a word. They love a little excitement like that.

'You have been very good to me, dear K. It is you who have made possible this happiness of mine to-night. I am promising myself to be very good, and not so vain, and to love my enemies—although I have none now. Miss Harrison has just congratulated me most kindly, and I am sure poor Joe has both forgiven and forgotten.

'Off to my first lecture!

'K.'

K. found the note on the hall table when he got home that night, and carried it upstairs to read. Whatever faint hope he might have had that her youth would prevent her acceptance he knew now was over. With the letter in his hand, he sat by his table and looked ahead into the empty years. Not quite empty, of course. She would be coming home.

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But more and more the life of the hospital would engross her. He surmised too, very shrewdly, that, had he ever had a hope that she might come to care for him, his very presence in the little house militated against him. There was none of the illusion of separation; he was always there, like Katie. When she opened the door she called 'Mother' from the hall. If Anna did not answer, she called him, in much the same voice.

He had built a wall of philosophy that had withstood even Wilson's recognition and protest. But enduring philosophy comes only with time; and he was young. Now and then all his defences crumbled before a passion that, when he dared to face it, shook him by its very strength. And that day all his stoicism went down before Sidney's letter. Its very frankness and affection hurt—not that he did not want her affection; but he craved so much more. He threw himself face down on the bed, with the paper crushed in his hand.

Sidney's letter was not the only one he received that day. When, in response to Katie's summons, he rose heavily and prepared for dinner, he found an unopened envelope on the table. It was from Max Wilson:

' DEAR LE MOYNE,—I have been going around in a sort of haze all day. The fact that I only heard your voice and scarcely saw you last night has made the whole thing even more unreal.

'I have a feeling of delicacy about trying to see you again so soon. I'm bound to respect your seclusion. But there are some things that have got to be discussed.

'You said last night that things were "different" with you. I know about that. You'd had one or two unlucky accidents. Do you know any man in our profession who has not? And, for fear you think I do not know what I am talking about, the thing was threshed out at the State Society when the question of the tablet came up. Old Barnes got up and said: "Gentlemen, all of us live more or less in glass houses. Let him who is without guilt among us throw the first stone." By George! You should have heard them!

'I didn't sleep last night. I took my little car and drove around the country roads, and the farther I went the more outrageous your position became. I'm not going to write any rot about the world needing men like you, although it's true enough. But our profession does. You working in a gas office, while old O'Hara bungles and hacks, and I struggle along on what I learned from you!

'It takes courage to step down from the pinnacle you stood on. So it's not cowardice that has set you down here. It's wrong conception. And I've thought of two things. The first, and best, is for you to go back. No one has taken your place, because no one could do the work. But if that's out of the question—and only you know that, for only you know the facts—the next best thing is this, and in all humility I make the suggestion.

'Take the State exams. under your present name, and when you've got your certificate come in with me. This isn't magnanimity.

I'll be getting a damn sight more than I give.

'Think it over, old man.

' M. W.

It is a curious fact that a man who is absolutely untrustworthy about women is often the soul of honour to other men. The younger Wilson, taking his pleasures lightly and not too discriminatingly, was making an offer that meant his ultimate eclipse, and doing it cheerfully, with his eyes open.

K. was moved. It was like Max to make such an offer, like him to do it as if he were asking a favour and not conferring one. But the offer left him untempted. He had weighed himself in the balance, and found himself wanting. No tablet on the college wall could change that. And when, late that night, Wilson found him on the balcony and added appeal to argument, the situation remained unchanged. He realised its hopelessness when K. lapsed into whimsical humour.

'I'm not absolutely useless where I am, you know, Max,' he said. 'I've raised three tomato plants and a family of kittens this summer, helped to plan a trousseau, assisted in selecting wall-paper for the room just inside—did you notice it?—and developed a boy pitcher with a ball that twists around the bat like a Colles fracture around a splint!'

'If you're going to be humorous-'

'My dear fellow,' said K. quietly, 'if I had no sense of humour, I should go upstairs to-night, turn on the gas, and make a stertorous entrance into eternity. By the way, that's something I forgot!'

'Eternity?'

'No. Among my other activities, I wired the parlour for electric light. The bride-to-be expects some electroliers as wedding gifts, and——'

Wilson rose and flung his cigarette into the grass.

'I wish to God I understood you!' he said irritably.

K. rose with him, and all the suppressed feeling of the interview was crowded into his last few words.

'I'm not as ungrateful as you think, Max,' he said. 'I—you've helped a lot. Don't worry about me. I'm as well off as I deserve to be, and better. Good night.'

'Good night.'

Wilson's unexpected magnanimity put K. in a curious position—left him, as it were, with a divided allegiance. Sidney's frank infatuation for the young surgeon was growing. He was quick to see it. And where before he might have felt justified in going to the length of warning her, now his hands were tied.

Max was interested in her. K. could see that, too. More than once he had taken Sidney back to the hospital in his car. Le Moyne, handicapped at every turn, found himself facing two alternatives, one but little better than the other. The affair might run a legitimate course, ending in marriage—a year of happiness for her, and then what marriage with Max, as he knew him would inevitably mean: wanderings away, remorseful returns to her, infidelities, misery. Or it might be less serious but almost equally unhappy for her. Max might throw caution to the winds, pursue her for a time—K. had seen him do this—and then, growing tired, change to some new attraction. In either case, he could only wait and watch, eating his heart out during the long evenings when Anna read her 'Daily Thoughts' upstairs and he sat alone with his pipe on the balcony.

Sidney went on night duty shortly after her acceptance. All of her orderly young life had been divided into two parts: day, when one played or worked, and night, when one slept. Now she was compelled to a readjustment: one worked in the night and slept in the day. Things seemed unnatural, chaotic. At the end of her first night report Sidney added what she could remember of a little verse of Stevenson's. She added it to the end of her general report, which was to the effect that everything had been quiet during the night except the neighbourhood.

'And does it not seem hard to you,' wrote Sidney,
'When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?'

The day assistant happened on the report, and was quite scandalised.

'If the night nurses are to spend their time making up poetry,' she said crossly, 'we'd better change this hospital into a young ladies' seminary. If she wants to complain about the noise in the street, she should do so in proper form.'

'I don't think she made it up,' said the Head, trying not to smile. 'I've heard something like it somewhere, and, what with the heat and the noise of traffic, I don't see how any of them get any sleep.'

But, because discipline must be observed, she wrote on the slip the assistant carried around: 'Please submit night reports in prose.'

Sidney did not sleep much. She tumbled into her low bed at nine o'clock in the morning those days, with her splendid hair neatly braided down her back and her prayers said, and immediately her active young mind filled with images—Christine's wedding, Dr. Max passing the door of her old ward and she not there, Joe—even Tillie, whose story was now the sensation of the Street. A few months before she would not have cared to think of Tillie. She would have retired her into the land of things-one-must-forget. But the Street's conventions were not holding Sidney's thoughts now. She puzzled over Tillie a great deal, and over Grace and her kind.

On her first night on duty, a girl had been brought in from the Avenue. She had taken a poison—nobody knew just what. When the house surgeons had tried to find out, she had only said: 'What's the use?'

And she had died.

Sidney kept asking herself, 'Why?' those mornings when she could not get to sleep. People were kind—men were kind, really—and yet, for some reason or other, those things had to be. Why?

After a time Sidney would doze fitfully. But by three o'clock she was always up and dressing. After a time the strain told on her. Lack of sleep wrote hollows around her eyes and killed some of her bright colour. Between three and four o'clock in the morning

' K.'

she was overwhelmed on duty by a perfect madness of sleep. There was a penalty for sleeping on duty. The old night watchman had a way of slipping up on one nodding. The night nurses wished they might fasten a bell on him!

Luckily, at four came early-morning temperatures; that roused her. And after that came the clatter of early milk-wagons and the rose hues of dawn over the roofs. Twice in the night, once at supper and again toward dawn, she drank strong black coffee. But after a week or two her nerves were stretched taut as a string.

Her station was in a small room close to her three wards. But she sat very little as a matter of fact. Her responsibility was heavy on her; she made frequent rounds. The late summer nights were fitful, feverish; the darkened wards stretched away like caverns from the dim light near the door. And from out of these caverns came petulant voices, uneasy movements, the banging of a cup on a bedside, which was the signal of thirst.

The older nurses saved themselves when they could. To them, perhaps just a little weary with time and much service, the banging cup meant not so much thirst as annoyance. They visited Sidney sometimes and cautioned her.

'Don't jump like that, child; they're not parched, you know.'

'But if you have a fever and are thirsty---'

'Thirsty nothing! They get lonely. All they want is to see somebody.'

'Then,' Sidney would say, rising resolutely, 'they are going to see me.'

Gradually the older girls saw that she would not save herself. They liked her very much, and they too had started in with willing feet and tender hands; but the thousand and one demands of their service had drained them dry. They were efficient, cool-headed, quick-thinking machines, doing their best, of course, but differing from Sidney in that their service was of the mind, while hers was of the heart. To them, pain was a thing to be recorded on their report; to Sidney, it was written on the tablets of her soul.

Carlotta Harrison went on night duty at the same time—her last night service, as it was Sidney's first. She accepted it stoically. She had charge of the three wards on the floor just below Sidney, and of the ward into which all emergency cases were taken. It was a difficult service, perhaps the most difficult in the house. Scarcely a night went by without its patrol or ambulance case. Ordinarily,

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the emergency ward had its own night nurse. But the house was full to overflowing. Belated vacations and illness had depleted the training school. Carlotta, given double duty, merely shrugged her shoulders.

'I've always had things pretty hard here,' she commented briefly. 'When I go out, I'll either be competent enough to run a whole hospital single-handed, or I'll be carried out feet first.'

Sidney was glad to have her so near. She knew her better than she knew the other nurses. Small emergencies were constantly arising and finding her at a loss. Once at least every night, Miss Harrison would hear a soft hiss from the back staircase that connected the two floors, and, going out, would see Sidney's flushed face

and slightly crooked cap bending over the stair-rail.

'I'm dreadfully sorry to bother you,' she would say, 'but Soand-So won't have a fever bath'; or, 'I've a woman here who refuses her medicine.' Then would follow rapid questions and equally rapid answers. Much as Carlotta disliked and feared the girl overhead, it never occurred to her to refuse her assistance. Perhaps the angels who keep the great record will put that to her credit.

Sidney saw her first death shortly after she went on night duty. It was the most terrible experience of all her life; and yet, as death goes, it was quiet enough. So gradual was it that Sidney, with K.'s little watch in hand, was not sure exactly when it happened. The light was very dim behind the little screen. One moment the sheet was quivering slightly under the struggle for breath, the next it was still. That was all. But to the girl it was catastrophe. That life, so potential, so tremendous a thing, could end so ignominiously, that the long battle should terminate always in this capitulation—it seemed to her that she could not stand it. Added to all her other new problems of living was this one of dying.

She made mistakes, of course, which the kindly nurses forgot to report—basins left about, errors on her records. She rinsed her thermometer in hot water one night, and startled a house surgeon by sending him word that Mary McGuire's temperature was a hundred and ten degrees. She let a delirious patient escape from the ward another night and go airily down the fire-escape before she discovered what had happened! Then she distinguished herself by flying down the iron staircase and bringing the runaway back single-handed.

'K.'

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For Christine's wedding the Street threw off its drab attire and assumed a wedding garment. In the beginning it was incredulous about some of the details.

'An awning from the house door to the kerbstone, and a policeman!' reported Mrs. Rosenfeld, who was finding steady employment at the Lorenz house. 'And another awning at the church, with a red carpet!'

Mr. Rosenfeld had arrived home and was making up arrears of rest and recreation.

'Huh!' he said. 'Suppose it don't rain. What then?' His Jewish father spoke in him.

'And another policeman at the church!' said Mrs. Rosenfeld triumphantly.

'Why do they ask 'em if they don't trust 'em ?'

But the mention of the policemen had been unfortunate. It recalled to him many things that were better forgotten. He rose and scowled at his wife.

'You tell Johnny something for me,' he snarled. 'You tell him when he sees his father walking down street, and he sittin' up there alone on that automobile, I want him to stop and pick me up when I hail him. Me walking, while my son swells around in a car! And another thing.' He turned savagely at the door. 'You let me hear of him road-housin', and I'll kill him!'

The wedding was to be at five o'clock. This, in itself, defied all traditions of the Street, which was either married in the very early morning at the Catholic church or at eight o'clock in the evening at the Presbyterian. There was something reckless about five o'clock. The Street felt the dash of it. It had a queer feeling that perhaps such a marriage was not quite legal.

The question of what to wear became, for the men, an earnest one. Dr. Ed resurrected an old black frock-coat and had a 'V' of black cambric set in the vest. Mr. Jenkins, the grocer, hired a cutaway, and bought a new Panama to wear with it. The deaf-and-dumb book agent who boarded at McKees', and who, by reason of his affliction, was calmly ignorant of the excitement around him, wore a borrowed dress-suit, and considered himself to the end of his days the only properly attired man in the church.

The younger Wilson was to be one of the ushers. When the newspapers came out with the published list and this was discovered, as well as that Sidney was the chief bridesmaid, there was a distinct quiver through the hospital training school. A probationer was

authorised to find out particulars. It was the day of the wedding then, and Sidney, who had not been to bed at all, was sitting in a sunny window in the Dormitory Annex, drying her hair.

The probationer was distinctly uneasy.

'I—I just wonder,' she said, 'if you would let some of the girls come in to see you when you're dressed?'

'Why, of course I will.'

'It's awfully thrilling, isn't it? And—isn't Dr. Wilson going to be an usher?'

Sidney coloured. 'I believe so.'

'Are you going to walk down the aisle with him?'

'I don't know. They had a rehearsal last night, but of course I was not there. I—I think I walk alone.'

The probationer had been instructed to find out other things; so she set to work with a fan at Sidney's hair.

'You've known Dr. Wilson a long time, haven't you?'

'Ages.'

'He's awfully good-looking, isn't he?'

Sidney considered. She was not ignorant of the methods of

the school. If this girl was pumping her-

'I'll have to think that over,' she said, with a glint of mischief in her eyes. 'When you know a person terribly well, you hardly know whether he's good-looking or not.'

'I suppose,' said the probationer, running the long strands of Sidney's hair through her fingers, 'that when you are at home you

see him often.'

Sidney got off the window-sill, and, taking the probationer

smilingly by the shoulders, faced her toward the door.

'You go back to the girls,' she said, 'and tell them to come in and see me when I am dressed, and tell them this: I don't know whether I am to walk down the aisle with Dr. Wilson, but I hope I am. I see him very often. I like him very much. I hope he likes me. And I think he's handsome.'

She shoved the probationer out into the hall and locked the door behind her.

That message in its entirety reached Carlotta Harrison. Her smouldering eyes flamed. The audacity of it startled her. Sidney must be very sure of herself.

She, too, had not slept during the day. When the probationer who had brought her the report had gone out, she lay in her long

white nightgown, hands clasped under her head, and stared at the vault-like ceiling of her little room.

She saw there Sidney in her white dress going down the aisle of the church; she saw the group around the altar; and, as surely as she lay there, she knew that Max Wilson's eyes would be, not on the bride, but on the girl who stood beside her.

The curious thing was that Carlotta felt that she could stop the wedding if she wanted to. She'd happened on a bit of information—many a wedding had been stopped for less. It rather obsessed her to think of stopping the wedding, so that Sidney and Max would not walk down the aisle together.

There came, at last, an hour before the wedding, a lull in the feverish activities of the previous month. Everything was ready. In the Lorenz kitchen, piles of plates, negro waiters, ice-cream freezers, and Mrs. Rosenfeld stood in orderly array. In the attic, in the centre of a sheet, before a toilet-table which had been carried upstairs for her benefit, sat, on this her day of days, the bride. All the second storey had been prepared for guests and presents.

Florists were still busy in the room below. Bridesmaids were clustered on the little staircase, bending over at each new ring of the bell and calling reports to Christine through the closed door:

'Another wooden box, Christine. It looks like more plates. What will you ever do with them all?'

'Good heavens! Here's another of the neighbours who wants to see how you look. Do say you can't have any visitors now.'

Christine sat alone in the centre of her sheet. The bridesmaids had been sternly forbidden to come into her room.

'I haven't had a chance to think for a month,' she said. 'And I've got some things I've got to think out.'

But, when Sidney came, she sent for her. Sidney found her sitting on a stiff chair, in her wedding-gown, with her veil spread out on a small stand.

'Close the door,' said Christine. And, after Sidney had kissed her:

'I've a good mind not to do it.'

'You're tired and nervous, that's all.'

'I am, of course. But that isn't what's wrong with me. Throw that veil somewhere and sit down.'

Christine was undoubtedly rouged, a very delicate touch. Sidney thought brides should be rather pale. But under her eyes were lines that Sidney had never seen there before. 'I'm not going to be foolish, Sidney. I'll go through with it, of course. It would put Mamma in her grave if I made a scene now.'

She suddenly turned on Sidney.

'Palmer gave his bachelor dinner at the Country Club last night. They all drank more than they should. Somebody called father up to-day and said that Palmer had emptied a bottle of wine into the piano. He hasn't been here to-day.'

'He'll be along. And as for the other-perhaps it wasn't

Palmer who did it.'

'That's not it, Sidney. I'm frightened.'

Three months before, perhaps, Sidney could not have comforted her; but three months had made a change in Sidney. The complacent sophistries of her girlhood no longer answered for truth. She put her arms around Christine's shoulders.

'A man who drinks is a broken reed,' said Christine. 'That's what I'm going to marry and lean on the rest of my life—a broken

reed. And that isn't all!'

She got up quickly, and, trailing her long satin train across the floor, bolted the door. Then from inside her corsage she brought out and held to Sidney a letter. 'Special delivery. Read it.'

It was very short; Sidney read it at a glance:

'Ask your future husband if he knows a girl at 213 —— Avenue.'
Three months before, the Avenue would have meant nothing to Sidney. Now she knew. Christine, more sophisticated, had always known.

'You see,' she said. 'That's what I'm up against.'

Quite suddenly Sidney knew who the girl at 213—— Avenue was. The paper she held in her hand was hospital paper with the heading torn off. The whole sordid story lay before her: Grace Irving, with her thin face and cropped hair, and the newspaper on the floor of the ward beside her!

One of the bridesmaids thumped violently on the door outside.

'Another electric light,' she called excitedly through the door.

And Palmer is downstairs.'

'You see,' Christine said drearily. 'I have received another electric lamp, and Palmer is downstairs! I've got to go through with it, I suppose. The only difference between me and other brides is that I know what I'm getting. Most of them do not.'

'You're going on with it?'

' K.'

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'It's too late to do anything else. I am not going to give this

neighbourhood anything to talk about.'

She picked up her veil and set the coronet on her head. Sidney stood with the letter in her hands. One of K.'s answers to her hot question had been this:

'There is no sense in looking back unless it helps us to look ahead. What your little girl of the ward has been is not so

important as what she is going to be.'

'Even granting this to be true,' she said to Christine slowly — 'and it may only be malicious, after all, Christine-it's surely over and done with. It's not Palmer's past that concerns you now: it's his future with you, isn't it?'

Christine had finally adjusted her veil. A band of Duchesse lace rose like a coronet from her soft hair, and from it, sweeping to the end of her train, fell fold after fold of soft tulle. She arranged the coronet carefully with small pearl-topped pins. Then she rose and put her hands on Sidney's shoulders.

'The simple truth is,' she said quietly, 'that I might hold Palmer if I cared-terribly. I don't. And I'm afraid he knows it. It's

my pride that's hurt, nothing else.'

And thus did Christine Lorenz go down to her wedding.

Sidney stood for a moment with the letter in her hands. Already, in her new philosophy, she had learned many strange things. One of them was this: that women like Grace Irving did not betray lovers; that the code of the under-world was 'death to the squealer'; that one played the game, and won or lost, and if he lost took his medicine. If not Grace, then who? Somebody else in the hospital who knew her story, of course. But who? And again-why?

Before going downstairs, Sidney placed the letter in a saucer and set fire to it with a match. Some of the radiance had died out

of her eyes.

The Street voted the wedding a great success. The alley, however, was rather confused by certain things. For instance, it regarded the awning as essentially for the carriage guests, and showed a tendency to duck in under the side when no one was looking. Mrs. Rosenfeld absolutely refused to take the usher's arm which was offered her, and said she guessed she was able to walk up alone.

Johnny Rosenfeld came, as befitted his position, in a complete

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chauffeur's outfit of leather cap and leggings, with the shield that was his State licence pinned over his heart.

The Street came decorously, albeit with a degree of uncertainty as to supper. Should they put something on the stove before they left, in case only ice-cream and cake were served at the house? Or was it just as well to trust to luck, and, if the Lorenz supper proved inadequate, to sit down to a cold snack when they got home?

To K., sitting in the back of the church between Harriet and Anna, the wedding was Sidney—Sidney only. He watched her first steps down the aisle, saw her chin go up as she gained poise and confidence, watched the swinging of her young figure in its gauzy white as she passed him and went forward past the long rows of craning necks. Afterwards he could not remember the wedding party at all. The service for him was Sidney, rather awed and very serious, beside the altar. It was Sidney who came down the aisle to the triumphant strains of the wedding march, Sidney with Max beside her!

On his rights at Harriet, having reached the first pinnacle of her new career. The wedding-gowns were successful. They were more than that—they were triumphant. Sitting there, she cast comprehensive eyes over the church, filled with potential brides.

To Harriet, then, that October afternoon was a future of endless lace and chiffon, the joy of creation, triumph eclipsing triumph. But to Anna, watching the ceremony with blurred eyes and ineffectual bluish lips, was coming her hour. Sitting back in the pew with her hands folded over her prayer-book, she said a little prayer for her straight young daughter, facing out from the altar with clear, unafraid eyes.

As Sidney and Max drew near the door, Joe Drummond, who had been standing at the back of the church, turned quickly and went out. He stumbled, rather, as if he could not see.

(To be continued.)

